A History of Counterinsurgency

Gregory Fremont-Barnes, Editor

From South Africa to Algeria, 1900 to 1954

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Volume 1

From South Africa to Algeria, 1900 to 1954

GREGORY FREMONT-BARNES, EDITOR

Praeger Security International

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Editor's Note

Readers, particularly those accustomed to British English, should note that this publication follows the *Chicago Manual of Style* for capitalization and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* for hyphenation.

The *Chicago Manual of Style* capitalizes only the formal names of armies, navies, etc. Words such as army and navy are lowercased when standing alone or when not part of an official name. Titles and offices are capitalized when they immediately precede a personal name but are lowercased when following a name or used in the place of a name. Political divisions (empire, republic, etc.) are capitalized when they follow a name and are used as an accepted part of the name but lowercased when used alone. When preceding a name, these terms are capitalized in the names of countries but lowercased in entities below the national level.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Gregory Fremont-Barnes

Conventional armies have long maintained an aversion to counterinsurgency. Most of their doctrine, training, ethos, and experience reflect their preference for engaging in operations against enemies trained and armed more or less like themselves and for employing similar tactics. Even after 1945, Western strategists, though confronted by the numerous wars of decolonization and others involving elements of asymmetric warfare, felt they understood the challenges of conventional war fighting, whether in Korea, Vietnam, the Falklands, or the Gulf, and consequently looked in dread at the alternative offered by counterinsurgency. In short, armies are conservative institutions, which by definition do not embrace change happily; insurgency offers challenges with which even the most sophisticated forces cannot easily cope. The uncomfortable reality remains that most wars are unconventional, low-intensity conflicts, which by their nature are usually protracted, are financially burdensome, seldom terminate with a clear-cut victor, and more often than not erode the reputations of senior officers and the forces under their command. Historically, insurgencies have been viewed as "ungentlemanly," the preserve of "uncivilized" foes, which in many cases have forced upon conventional armies frustrating operating environments with inconclusive results marking the outcome of intermittent fighting.

Insurgency and counterinsurgency do not constitute new forms of warfare, for in their modern manifestations their roots may be traced back to the nineteenth century, with guerrilla operations themselves enjoying a long historical legacy dating back to ancient times. The British and French are best acquainted with modern counterinsurgency, whose features as we know them today began to emerge out of the former's experience in South Africa, when guerrilla operations replaced the conventional phase

of the Anglo-Boer War during the second year of that conflict. Nevertheless, the roots of modern counterinsurgency may be said to stretch back a century, to the late eighteenth century, for with the growth of revolution and nationalism war became increasingly the mechanism by which disenfranchised or oppressed groups sought to achieve a new political order without the application of conventional force, in combination with elements of terrorism, propaganda, and subversion—in short, all the features of insurgency with which we are familiar today. War wedded to an ideology and pursued by peoples rather than sovereigns, obliged governments, and their armed forces to adapt to new circumstances and to develop principles of counterinsurgency, which would heavily influence the methods later employed in the twentieth century and beyond.

Three notable instances, all involving the French, predate the period on which the present study focuses, yet each reveals a number of characteristics consistent with those featured in COIN operations of more recent times. A brief look at these case studies is therefore instructive: the suppression of the revolt in the Vendée from 1793 to 1795, the antiguerrilla operations in Spain and Portugal between 1808 and 1813, and the conquest of Algeria between 1830 and 1847.

The French Revolution, the first modern ideological movement, may be seen as the mainspring of modern insurgency and counterinsurgency, for it unleashed ideas of popular resistance and the concept of the citizen soldier that heavily influenced the conduct of the armies of revolutionary and Napoleonic France—and yet paradoxically sparked a spirit of resistance among its enemies. Thus, hardly had the armies of the revolution begun to confront the royalist armies of Austria, Prussia, and the Holy Roman Empire than in 1793 troops of the French Republic converged on the western region known as the Vendée to suppress a rising of conservative peasants and their clergy, many of whom desired the return of monarchism, strongly supported the primacy of the Catholic faith, and opposed the abolition of conscription and other initiatives emanating from Paris but anathema to many rural Frenchmen.[1]

By the Civil Constitution of the Clergy of November 1790, priests were obliged to swear an oath of allegiance to the government, in violation of the principle of the primacy of the Catholic Church to appoint its own clergy. For the scattered, isolated rural communities of western France, the church represented an institution of unity and conservative continuity, as well as a symbol of regional identity. Officials sent from Paris at best met a frosty reception at best and violence at worst. The government's efforts at de-Christianizing the region only exacerbated an already fraught situation, which pitted an anticlerical and radical urban movement against a deeply conservative, religious rural community wishing to carry on the traditions of previous generations. In the poverty-stricken Vendée, moreover, seigneurial dues had historically not

been burdensome, and thus more equitable taxation formed a prominent feature of their objection to revolutionary reforms that rendered the peasantry worse off than under the *ancien régime*. The military demands of the republic also fell heavily on the Vendée, including the government's efforts to raise 300,000 men across France after the declaration of war against Britain, Holland, and Spain in February 1793, in conjunction with demands from Paris for substantial supplies of livestock and produce for the army.

Led largely by aristocrats in a counter-revolutionary surge of patriotism, the Vendéan revolt faced the horrendous onslaught of government forces in a bloodbath, which accounted for over a third of all victims of the infamous "Terror" of 1793–94. After initial successes by poorly armed and trained peasants who compensated for such inferiorities by virtue of high motivation and an intimate knowledge of the ground, the insurgents found themselves badly defeated in October 1793, obliging not only the fighters themselves but their families to retreat to the Normandy coast, only to turn back when hoped-for British naval assistance did not materialize and the prospect of evacuation by sea evaporated. Returning in despair to the Vendée, in December the surviving insurgents lost again at two major engagements and were largely massacred in the marshlands at Savenay, on the Loire estuary.

Government troops suppressed the remains of the revolt with exceptionally harsh measures not seen since the Wars of Religion of the seventeenth century, including the mass drowning of captured rebels in the ice-cold waters of the Loire at Nantes by General Jean-Baptiste Carrier. At the same time, General Turreau's system of fast-moving "infernal columns" swept the Vendée in early 1794, employing a "scorched-earth" policy wherever they passed. Estimates of those killed vary, but at least 150,000 and as many as 200,000 civilians died in what probably justly qualifies as the first modern European genocide. Simple statistics, however, do not explain the degree of brutality practiced by both sides, with government forces in particular carrying out mass killings and reprisals in response to guerrilla attacks, where women and children frequently bearing the greatest burden of casualties. Authorities merciful enough to spare the rebels and their dependents, the bayonet, or the noose still demonstrated little appetite for concession, deporting insurgents and their families instead, burning or confiscating their homes, or seizing their livestock and crops to resupply the army. The government employed to its advantage forces diverted from other fronts, though all republican forces were hampered by difficult terrain, the enclosed *bocage* country of high hedges, and sunken roads being perfectly suited to guerrilla warfare.

Once the Jacobins lost power during the Thermidorian Reaction in the summer of 1794, the government demonstrated some conciliation, offering an amnesty to rebels and General Louis-Lazare Hoche disarming the

populace while simultaneously showing greater religious toleration and imposing more effective discipline on his soldiers to prevent looting, rape, and the destruction of property. The return of confiscated property and compensation offered for troops' misconduct and outright abuses also contributed to an atmosphere of reduced tensions, which eased the government's efforts to reestablish its authority in the West. By that time, Hoche had already established strong fortified posts throughout the region, backed by mobile columns capable of crushing those not yet reconciled to peace, which the government finally declared in July 1795. Renewed fighting occurred in 1796 and 1799, ending only after Bonaparte, as First Consul, heavily garrisoned the region in 1800 and strengthened the government's position as a consequence of the Concordat with the Pope the following year. Violence flared up on a sporadic basis thereafter, but until the Royalist rising of 1815, the Vendée remained largely pacified—more the product of the government's policy of extreme brutality than to anything akin to the "hearts and minds" doctrine advocated by some counterinsurgent forces of the twentieth century.

In Spain, which the French occupied between 1808 and 1813, Napoleon faced an insurgency of enormous proportions in a guerrilla war that may have cost him as many as 300,000 lives.[2] Napoleon maintained large numbers of troops to hold down Iberia, such that between 1810 and 1812 he possessed 400,000 men in the Peninsula. Wellington, by contrast, never commanded more than 60,000 British troops, though these were supplemented by Portuguese and, to a much lesser extent, Spanish regulars. Given the numerical superiority of the French, it begs the question as to why the French failed. In simple terms, the bulk of their forces could never be concentrated against the Allies, but they rather were spread across occupied Spain in an unwieldy program of pacification, which confronted an insurgency of such virulence that the French never possessed a reasonable hope of quashing it, especially when the guerrillas acted in support of Wellington's conventional army.

Garrison duty alone—quite apart from active measures to root out and pursue the guerrilla bands—tied down large numbers of French troops, drawing them away from frontline duties where they were most needed. In the summer of 1811 alone, the French deployed 70,000 troops to maintain their lines of communication in areas where guerrillas operating between Madrid and the frontier with France often did so with virtual impunity. As a consequence, large numbers of troops became otherwise unavailable elsewhere to confront Wellington in Portugal and, later, in Spain. In short, the guerrillas, working in conjunction with the Anglo-Portuguese regular army—which by itself could not liberate Iberia—diverted French troops and harassed requisition parties, patrols, couriers, and convoys. Insurgents also disrupted lines of communication, collected intelligence, and denied it to the French by rounding up sympathizers

and spies. Indeed, the omnipresence of the guerrillas left the French perpetually vigilant, never able to rest, with a consequent negative impact on morale, and imposing upon them an exhausting effort merely to hold what represented only a small proportion of the Iberian Peninsula—notwithstanding the nominal control of the whole country as represented by contemporary maps. When the French withdrew their troops from a given area, it reverted to the guerrillas, negating whatever efforts the French had made in occupying or conquering them in the first place. Little wonder that the word *guerrilla* has entered the military lexicon.

Consistent with so many more modern counterinsurgency campaigns, French troops could only reply on the certainty of maintaining control in the cities and larger towns; beyond these confines—and it must be stressed that the great bulk of the population were rural dwellers—occupying forces operated in a permanently hostile environment, whereas Wellington reaped the benefits of an obliging population and a steady stream of intelligence furnished by the guerrillas. In due course, emboldened by years of small successes and developing into veterans of their trade, the guerrillas eventually confronted substantial bodies of French troops and prevailed over them in many instances. Guerrilla activity also deprived the French of the benefits of collecting taxes in many regions, not to mention the adverse implications for local recruitment.

In answer to the frustrating task of encountering guerrillas in hostile territory and forbidding terrain, the French executed civilians and captured insurgents in retaliation for prisoners of theirs killed in guerrilla hands. They also sought to coerce civil officials in the war against the insurgents, with Spanish officials in French service offered rewards for information leading to the arrest of guerrillas. Municipal officials were ordered to produce lists of men who had left their houses vacant or who had recently returned, together with the names of all their relatives, and Spanish functionaries were instructed to report to their French superiors the names of the clergy who preached insurrection. Failure to perform this function and those discovered protecting insurgents would be arrested and possibly executed, but none of these threats produced effective results.

In Navarre in the spring of 1810, in a vain attempt to render the occupation of that province a self-funding exercise, the French imposed heavy new taxes that exceeded the ability of the peasantry to sustain, causing many in turn to flee into the arms of the insurgency to avoid imprisonment. In some regions, the French offered an amnesty to all those who surrendered their weapons or joined a French-sponsored militia unit. This expedient attracted a few recruits, but most Spaniards declined. Similarly, although the government on Joseph Bonaparte in Madrid managed to form several regiments composed of collaborators, augmented by civil guards and counterinsurgency units composed of Spaniards formed

in a few provinces, the whole scheme for the establishment of units comprising indigenous soldiers proved a miserable failure—partly out of hatred of the French and partly out of fear of reprisal from the insurgents.

When French efforts to gain compliance and cooperation failed, some administrators and commanders turned to terror and brutality. A range of penalties for noncompliance existed. For instance, municipalities that failed to report a man missing from a village might be fined or obliged to supply a man in his place to serve in French service, and anyone missing for a lengthy period from his home without permission from local authorities could suffer the confiscation of his property. In some regions, unauthorized absence from one's home led the authorities to presume a missing man to be a member of a guerrilla band and therefore condemned him to death upon return. Priests and mayors who failed to furnish names of the missing had to face the wrath of military commissions formed specifically to prosecute them, with deportation the punishment on conviction. Clergy suspected of encouraging resistance were also arrested and deported. But in all such cases, the French were only capable of enforcement in areas that they controlled by virtue of the presence of a garrison.

The French also sought to suppress political activity by passing strict regulations governing the number of people who could congregate in public or private and established police forces to report these practices. In some areas, Spaniards were required to take an oath of allegiance to King Joseph's regime, numerous public gatherings such as bull fights were banned, and the proprietors of public houses had to provide information on their guests, including their names, destination, and length of stay. Internal travel required a passport, which people were obliged to present to innkeepers and city officials. In some cases, French authorities arrested and fined the heads of families unable to account for absent children and grandchildren, with failure to pay resulting in deportation.

In dealing specifically with the insurgents as opposed to the civilian population at large, the French regarded the former as bandits rather than as soldiers and consequently refused to provide them with the same protection accorded to prisoners of war. Thus, some rebels were executed without trial, and their bodies left to hang for days in trees outside a town or city gate as a warning to others. Harsh measures such as these only encouraged more men to flock to the insurgency and to exact their own price upon the invaders, such as hanging an equivalent number of French soldiers in retaliation for the deaths of their comrades, with the resulting cycle of violence inevitably leading the French to execute innocent civilians when the supply of insurgent prisoners dried up. Often prominent locals such as monks found themselves conveyed to a gallows erected in the town square, where soldiers held back at bayonet point angry mobs seeking to rescue the condemned. In many cases, the authorities hanged several prisoners for every French soldier found killed by the guerrillas,

again with recourse to the civilian population when the supply of insurgent prisoners was exhausted.

Priests were sometimes required to read regulations from their pulpits, with refusal to do so resulting in arrest and deportation. Clerics publishing works critical of the regime, especially those encouraging resistance, faced military tribunals, as did those who actively aided the insurgents—or even communicated with them. The French planted informants in churches, in public places, and in taverns to monitor local opinion and to uncover instances of sedition. Priests in particular came in for a particularly difficult time, because many read out to their parishioners proclamations issued by the guerrillas or hid wounded insurgents. In some cases, the French conducted mass arrests in areas that they believed strongly supported the local insurgency by way of information, supplies, or large numbers of recruits. Towns and villages in areas near which French forces were ambushed by guerrillas suffered accordingly, as punishment for the inhabitants' failure to warn the troops of the presence of guerrillas or their perceived collaboration. Retribution often took the form of houses being razed to the ground, but in some cases whole villages went up in flames whether or not actual evidence of collusion existed, thus deepening further the rift between the inhabitants and the occupiers.

French methods at counterinsurgency varied across Iberia and were not universally harsh. In some cases, governors sought to placate the inhabitants by preserving local institutions, though in many instances the French simply appointed the members of such bodies, especially those involved in collecting taxes. Guerrillas did in some instances turn in their weapons and even provided the names of their compatriots to the authorities, but in most cases the insurgency merely hardened its resolve and even as guerrilla leaders became more successful in the field and the prices on their own heads rose in consequence, their fellow countrymen seldom succumbed to the temptations offered by the increasingly lucrative rewards offered by the French.

The French, it must be said, did not sit idle in the towns and cities but in fact clashed numerous times with the guerrillas, sometimes in engagements involving several hundred troops at a time, but more often than not such encounters occurred on the insurgents' terms, involving ambushes in gorges and passes where the French tended to lose heavily. In the few instances when guerrillas were caught in the open by French cavalry or surrounded by large formations specifically tasked with engaging them, the insurgents did suffer substantial losses, and in such cases the French could achieve for themselves a temporary respite from further molestation—even for a few months, but these cases proved exceptional.

More often than not, rather than resorting to the use of mobile columns that the guerrillas could usually elude, the French established fixed

positions in the form of blockhouses and small forts established to provide cities in the interior with a degree of protection over the area extending to the coast and as places of refuge for small bodies of troops operating in mountain passes. Towers erected along main roads were linked by a semaphore system to provide information of insurgent movement and to enable French troops to venture out with some inkling of what sort of threat they might face. In practice, however, the blockhouses provided little protection and failed adequately to provide intelligence of guerrilla activity unless a courier—often requiring a substantial escort for his protection—was sent to the nearest French garrison.

Thus, despite concerted efforts to quash the insurgency in Spain, the French failed miserably, though their experiences provided many lessons for the generation of soldiers engaged in the first post-Napoleonic campaign—in Algeria.

General Thomas-Robert Bugeaud, a veteran of the Peninsular War and commander of the French army in Algeria for much of the 1830s and 40s,[3] rejected the strategy employed in Spain of using stationary outposts, maintaining that one reason for French failure in the Peninsula was its dependence on an immobile defensive network. Tying up forces in towns and cities left the insurgents in control of the countryside; this could not be tolerated. In Bugeaud's view, small, mobile units should be utilized for scouting and intelligence gathering, not least to prevent guerrillas from encircling or ambushing troop formations of numerically superior strength. Patrols might consist of little more than a handful of men, but by operating night and day they could keep at bay insurgents targeting the destruction of foragers or troops at rest. Judicious use of scouts also offered the best likelihood of finding uninterrupted routes of retreat, if necessary.

Bugeaud maintained no faith in barriers reckoned by fellow officers to be impenetrable to the enemy. As an alternative, he sent out units to patrol a given sector peculiar to itself, consisting of small scouting units acting in conjunction with larger contingents of troops specially tasked for this purpose. These scouts were to collect intelligence, not to initiate combat, and in turn would enable larger forces the discretion to engage the guerrillas at a time and place of their choosing. Bugeaud also strongly believed that success in counterinsurgency depended on knowledge of the theatre of operations and a capacity for mobility. Effective leadership and high morale also figured strongly in Bugeaud's philosophy. He believed strongly that senior commanders make themselves familiar with the men and thereby build trust and esprit de corps. He understood its importance based on the low morale he discovered on his arrival in Algeria as governor general in 1836. He also revamped the system of transport and supply, abandoning the practice of moving heavy artillery in the field. He eliminated the use of indigenous forces having

responsibility for supply and reformed the system that had slowed columns of troops. He recognized that in the numerous, scattered, and overmanned French forts, the garrisons had become sick and often died just as quickly as they did on the march.

Bugeaud also made improvements to equipment, rations, and medical care, improving the rates of recovery from diseases such as malaria, lowering the rate of suicide, and improving morale—and thus combat effectiveness. By freeing columns of heavy artillery and heavy-laden wagons, he decreased exhaustion and sickness and imparted far greater mobility to his troops than anything previously known in that theater of operations. A well-organized transport system was expected to carry several more days' rations than normally required, and by 1836, six years after the start of the campaign in Algeria, the ponderous wagons and artillery more suited to European conventional warfare and the columns of up to 10,000 men had been replaced by much more mobile alternatives. Bugeaud also ended the practice of generals choosing the most obvious, geographically simplest line of approach through hostile territory, a circumstance that began to confound the Algerians, who previously had little trouble predicting the routes of approach and withdrawal chosen by the French.

He also removed responsibility for the transport of provisions and the wounded from indigenous auxiliaries. Mule and camel drivers sometimes displayed shocking disregard for the welfare of the wounded and the condition of the supplies in their care, frequently abandoning their loads in a panic on the appearance of Arab tribesmen. By virtue of further army reforms, individual French soldiers, previously treated like pack animals, found their burdens considerably lessened, thus facilitating much more rapid movement than before. Moreover, by cutting back on static defenses, Bugeaud drastically reduced the incidences of disease, which inevitably cropped up among men lacking good hygiene and living together in confined places. By thus returning mobility to his troops, Bugeaud regained the initiative and raised morale for the army as a whole, but particularly for those previously cooped up with nothing to do. He improved the quality of bedding for troops on campaign, replacing the common practice of soldiers sleeping on the bare ground. The wide issue of wool mattresses and hammocks were widely cut back on instances of flea infestation; rations were improved with the elimination of poor-quality bread and rice, as well as salted meat that induced diarrhea and even death from dehydration. Better-quality boots were also provided to the men, and hungry troops' consumption of whatever came to hand—cats, dogs, and roots—came to an end. Most importantly, Bugeaud ended the practice of troops drinking stagnant, disease-ridden water in the field and ensured that they were supplied with clean water transported by pack animal. All these reforms lowered the numbers of

patients in hospital—and, thus, the rate of mortality—and conversely raised morale, thus preserving numbers and improving the troops' effectiveness. Medical reforms also involved the construction of more permanent facilities consisting of substantial buildings in place of wooden huts and more compassionate care in place of the rough handling previously meted out by doctors and attendants.

Thanks to Bugeaud's reforms, mobile columns could operate for long periods in the field and cover greater distances in quicker time than the larger, more baggage-dependent formations of the earlier period of campaigning in Algeria. The corollary of this was obvious: the insurgents must be relentlessly pursued. To that end, the French abandoned their use of native drivers and formed special detachments of their own troops to manage the pack animals and to supervise evacuation of the wounded, in conjunction with a greater emphasis on living off the land. By increasing the numbers of pack animals, which were to be requisitioned in theatre, ammunition would become their burden rather than the men's, and as such soldiers could concentrate on pursuing and, hopefully, surprising the enemy. Obstacles previously thought beyond the means of French troops to traverse became manageable so that they went practically anywhere their Arab or Berber adversaries did.

According to these new methods, the French infantryman carried little more than his musket and a small amount of ammunition, with everything else consigned to the new mobile corps of mules. Meat could be obtained from cattle seized in raids or from the wild game widely available across the region. The men became adept at locating the Arabs' secret underground granaries whose seizure not only benefitted the French but denied supplies to the Arab fighters, thus reducing the mobility of the tribesmen. Pursuit now became the watchword of the newly mobile French forces. The enemy was to be denied areas for rest, recovery, and recruitment, and by its new capacity for mobility the French could disrupt the Arabs' ability to plant and harvest their crops and to graze their flocks without permission from the French. Bugeaud could thus abolish all but the essential existing permanent garrisons that manned camps and supply depots; in short, the sort of paralysis so characteristic of Spain was gone. Subduing the countryside meant mobility, everything was pursued toward that end, and by 1843 this new policy was reaping dividends when most of the recalcitrant, previously elusive tribes succumbed to the unceasing raids and unrelenting efforts of the French.

But French counterinsurgency extended into other realms. Bugeaud attracted the cooperation of tribes discriminated against by the Arabs, such as the Koulouglis, who were granted the right to collect tribute from Arab tribes and given police powers in certain areas of the interior. In short, by providing benefits to disenfranchised groups, the French could divide and rule. They also came to realize that success rested on

ruling the indigenous population through its traditional authorities. Assimilating the Arabs into French society proved key, and the authorities began to promote trade between the two sides. But "carrot and stick" always proceeded together; thus, some Algerians were resettled in villages constructed or subsidized by the French and while some tribes surrendered owing to the severe winter of 1841–42, which killed large numbers of tribesmen and their herds, the French also induced capitulation by deliberately harsh measures, such as occupying or destroying villages in the interior, and seizing supply concentrations and stocks of arms, thereby rendering the task of Abd el Kader, the principal leader of Algerian resistance, infinitely greater. Bugeaud also ordered the construction of an immense ditch and earthworks to cover an area 10 miles by 60 miles, to protect the European settlements in the Mitidja Plain, although he abandoned this ambitious and very labor-intensive enterprise when local resistance collapsed. Still, fortification, as shown by the elimination of many of the outlying posts, could never offer a substitute for the subjugation of the countryside; the French refused to forfeit the initiative and actively pursued an aggressive policy that demanded constant pursuit.

Bugeaud also initiated a system of indirect rule by which surrendered tribal chiefs could maintain a degree of autonomy if they adhered to various French requirements and personally bore responsibility for the conduct of the tribes. He then sought improvements between themselves and the Algerians as a form of reconciliation and assimilation. Whole tribes pledging submission were sometimes resettled in new areas where control was deemed easier and new chiefs were selected or approved by French authorities where necessary, but with tribal chiefs having the power, among others, to decide who could be employed by the French as laborers. Relocation was enforced by punishment when necessary, such as fines or imprisonment with hard labor, or death to those with unauthorized weapons caught at night. Indirect rule spread as more and more tribes submitted, which was just as well since in the early years the French did not have sufficient numbers of administrators to rule unilaterally.

The French also imposed taxes, but efforts were made to tailor these to the ability of the tribe to pay, and chiefs were encouraged or obliged to ally themselves to the French against other tribes. Tribal leaders became responsible for the security of travellers in their own regions, rendering travel and trade safer and giving the Arabs a sense of self-policing. Tribes that failed to submit to French rule or that revolted after submission were answered with deportation, sometimes on a considerable scale—and in a few cases, massacres took place, particularly following harrowing sieges such as at Constantine.

But with the carrot went the stick, so that loyal Arabs were largely treated with respect and a benevolent paternalism prevailed that included

provision of medical care to the indigenous population. In due course, the authorities condemned colonist violence directed against peaceful Arabs, issued decrees for the punishment of the former, and instigated a policy of noninterference in religious customs and practices. They encouraged trade with tribes who had submitted to French rule, correctly appreciating that Arabs and Berbers whose standard of living rose as a result of commercial advantage were likely to remain loyal. Following the conquest of Algeria, the gradual replacement of Arab with French officials at all levels took hold, but in the course of the many years required to pacify the tribes, the French managed to implement many measures that mirror those adopted in the twentieth century by themselves and a host of other nations engaged in counterinsurgency.

NOTES

1. See, for instance, James Roberts, *The Counter-Revolution in France, 1787–1830* (London: Macmillan, 1990); Reynald Sécher, *A French Genocide: The Vendée*, trans. by George Holoch (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003); Maurice Hutt, *Chouannerie and Counter-Revolution: Puisaye, the Princes and the British Government in the 1790s*, 2 vols (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Peter Paret, *Internal War and Pacification: The Vendée, 1789–1796* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961); James Roberts, *The Counter-Revolution in France, 1787–1830* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1990); Donald Sutherland, *The Chouans: The Social Origins of Popular Counter-Revolution in Upper Brittany, 1770–1796* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1982); Michael Ross, *Banners of the King: The War of the Vendée 1793* (London: Seeley Service, 1975).

2. See, for instance, Charles Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon: Guerrillas, Bandits and Adventurers in Spain, 1808–14* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); John Tone, *The Fatal Knot: The Guerrilla War in Navarre and the Defeat of Napoleon in Spain* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Don Alexander, *Rod of Iron: French Counterinsurgency in Aragon during the Peninsular War* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1985). For other aspects of Napoleonic counterinsurgency, see Milton Finley, *The Most Monstrous of Wars: Napoleonic Guerrilla War in Southern Italy, 1806–1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994).

3. See, for example, Anthony Thrall Sullivan, *Thomas-Robert Bugeaud: France and Algeria, 1784–1849—Politics, Power, and the Good Society* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1983); John W. Kiser, *Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abd el-Kader* (Bartlow, UK: Archetype, 2008); Wilfrid Blunt, *Desert Hawk: Abd el Kader and the French Conquest of Algeria* (London: Methuen, 1947); Major G. B. Laurie, *The French Conquest of Algeria* (Uckfield, UK: Naval & Military Press, 2004).

CHAPTER 2

"Methods of Barbarism": British Counterinsurgency in South Africa, 1900–02

Gregory Fremont-Barnes

> I hope something may be done before long to bring it home to the Boers that they cannot carry on the present system of warfare with impunity. I feel sure that strong measures would soon end the war.[1]
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> —Lord Kitchener, General Officer Commanding, South Africa, to William St. John Brodrick, secretary of state for war, July 5, 1901

THE CONVENTIONAL PHASE OF THE WAR—IN BRIEF

Dutch settlers, later known as "Boers," established themselves in southern Africa beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, gradually expanding north into the hinterland, pressing against lands held by indigenous African tribes. Dutch rule ended, however, when in 1795, Britain seized Cape Colony during the French Revolutionary Wars (and again in 1806 after it had been restored to Holland in 1802), and at the general European peace of 1814, the colony became a permanent British imperial possession. From the 1830s, many Boers ventured north to establish independent communities that would later become the republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, both of which shared borders with the British possessions of Cape Colony and Natal.

The source of Anglo-Boer hostility principally lay with the desire for British expansion into Boer lands, partly owing to the discovery of gold and diamonds, but also out of a desire to create a federation of all the "white" territories of southern Africa. After the Transvaal was proclaimed

in December 1880, conflict arose in what subsequently became known as the Transvaal Revolt or the First Anglo-Boer War.[2] A small Boer force invaded Natal and defeated a British force at Laing's Nek in December and, again, this time decisively, at Majuba Hill, in February 1881. The British government had no desire to pursue the conflict further and in April 1881 concluded the Treaty of Pretoria, which granted independence to the Transvaal, of which Paul Kruger became president. The discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand in 1886 increased British interest in the area and led directly to the annexation of Zululand, conquered seven years earlier, as part of a strategy to isolate the Transvaal from accessing the sea. Internally, both Boer republics welcomed foreigners (known as *uitlanders*) seeking work in the goldfields, in the diamond industry, and in various urban businesses and services, but the Boers often resented what they perceived as a growing trend of immorality and licentiousness that permeated their strict, largely rural, Calvinist society. On the other hand, immigrants, most of whom hailed from Britain, resented the disproportionate share of taxation that fell on their shoulders and campaigned for a share in the political life of the country—a risk to Boer sovereignty in light of the massive swell of immigration that threatened to overwhelm the Afrikaner community.[3]

Both Boer republics made large purchases of foreign weapons in 1899, and when Cape authorities refused to conform to an ultimatum from Pretoria to withdraw troops from the borders, hostilities opened in October, with the Boers assuming the offensive. On October 13, General Piet Cronjé laid siege to Mafeking, where Colonel Robert Baden-Powell, the future founder of the Boy Scout movement, made superb use of limited resources to establish a determined and successful defense. At the same time, forces from the Orange Free State invested Kimberley, in Natal, on October 15, while the main Boer blow fell on General Sir George White at Talana Hill and Nicholson's Nek later that month, forcing White's troops to take refuge in Ladysmith. In an effort to relieve the three towns, General Sir Redvers Buller divided his forces, a strategy that led to failure in all cases.

At the Modder River on November 28, General Lord Methuen, commanding a column of 10,000 men, seeking to relieve Kimberley, found his progress blocked by 7,000 Boers under Cronjé and Jacobus de la Rey. After losing some 500 killed and wounded, Methuen succeeded in driving through the Boer lines, but his exhausted troops required rest, and no pursuit was possible. Senior British commanders were slow to appreciate three fundamental lessons: first, it was nearly impossible to inflict anything beyond negligible losses on Boer defenders occupying entrenched positions; second, smokeless powder and repeating rifles, fired from concealed positions, rendered frontal attacks costly, nearly insupportable affairs; and third, since all Boer forces were mounted—even if, through

force of numbers, they were eventually driven off—they could simply vanish into the vast expanse of the veldt, reform, and fight again on another occasion. The British Army could not, at least initially, offer an adequate answer to such tactics, for it possessed paltry numbers of mounted forces, and was obliged to rely heavily on Cape yeomanry units. Until the arrival of mounted reinforcements, therefore, British troops were forced to cover enormous areas of hostile territory on foot, with little or no opportunity of pursuit even when success on the battlefield invited it.

Yet even with growing numbers of reinforcements, the British continued to find themselves bested by Boer units, known as "commandos," both more determined than themselves and with considerably more knowledge of the ground. At Stormberg, on December 10, a British force under General Sir William Gatacre lost heavily in an ambush; the same day, at Magersfontein, 8,000 Boers under Cronjé entrenched themselves on a hill overlooking the Modder River and inflicted heavy casualties on Methuen's force, which not only unwisely attacked frontally in heavy rain, but without extending into open order. The third British disaster of what became known as "Black Week" took place at Colenso, on December 15, when 21,000 men under Buller, seeking to relieve Ladysmith, crossed the Tugela River and attempted to turn the flank of General Louis Botha, in command of 6,000 Orange Free State troops. The Boers, dug in as usual, easily drove off their adversaries, whose flank attack became encumbered by broken ground. Buller suffered about 150 killed and 800 wounded, together with more than 200 men and 11 guns captured.

Disillusioned with this string of defeats, Buller advocated surrendering Ladysmith, a view that led to his being relieved of senior command. His replacement, Field Marshal Viscount Roberts, the hero of the Second Afghan War (1878–81),[4] had extensive experience of colonial warfare, and from January 1900 he and his chief of staff, Lord Kitchener, began a massive program of army reorganization, in recognition of the need to raise a sizeable force of mounted infantry and cavalry. Buller, meanwhile, remained in the field, only to be repulsed at the Tugela in the course of two separate attacks: first at Spion Kop on January 23 and then at Vaal Kranz on February 5. The British lost about 400 killed and 1,400 wounded; Boer casualties, as usual, were disproportionately small, with only 100 killed and wounded. Nevertheless, General Sir John French managed to relieve Kimberley on February 15, and on the same day, Roberts, with a column of 30,000 men, skirted Cronjé's left flank at Magersfontein, obliging the Boers to withdraw lest their communications be cut off. At Paardeberg on February 18, Cronjé found his retreat across the Modder River opposed by French, who arrived from Kimberley. Owing to illness, French handed command to Kitchener, whose unimaginative frontal assault predictably failed against the Boers' prepared positions, leaving some 300 British dead and 900 wounded.

Fortunes were soon to change, however. On recovering, Roberts resumed command and encircled Cronjé's position at Paardeberg, shelling the Boers with impunity while expecting an attempted breakout that never transpired. After an eight-day siege, the Boers, burdened with many wounded and out of food, surrendered on February 27. Almost simultaneously, the British enjoyed successes in other theaters. Buller, positioned along the Tugela in his third effort to relieve Ladysmith, managed to dislodge the Boers from their positions around the town and reached the garrison on February 28.

For the next six months Roberts, finally benefitting from the arrival of large numbers of reinforcements, was able to make good use of the railways to move troops and supplies considerable distances through Boer territory. Accordingly, on March 13, he captured Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, which was annexed to the British Empire on the 24th as the Orange River Colony. In Natal, Buller defeated the Boers at Glencoe and Dundee on May 15, and two days later a fast-moving column of cavalry and mounted infantry under General Bryan Mahon relieved Mafeking after a seven-month ordeal. On May 27, Roberts crossed the frontier into the Transvaal. Ian Hamilton, now promoted to lieutenant general for his services at Ladysmith, encountered a Boer force under de la Rey on May 29 at Doornkop, where he lost heavily. Still, Roberts's main force carried without meeting resistance, capturing the Witwatersrand goldmines and entering Johannesburg on May 30. On June 2, Kruger and his government left Pretoria and proceeded eastward along the Delagoa Bay railway as far as Machadodorp. Roberts entered Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal, unopposed and in triumph, on June 5, 1900.

Roberts having already, as we have seen, taken Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, and the gold mines, he could be forgiven for thinking that he had broken the back of his adversaries' resistance: Boer morale had reached an all-time low, both republican capitals lay in British hands with no prospect of recapture, and thousands of *hensoppers* or "hands-uppers" had capitulated, not least after Kruger and Botha on May 31 had telegraphed their opposites in the Free State government to point out the futility of further resistance. With the promise of amnesty and protection for all Boers who pledged permanently to lay down their arms, additional thousands abandoned the cause and returned to their homes. Under these circumstances, Roberts could with confidence assume that the remainder of the war would consist of "mopping-up" operations. President Marthinus Steyn was on the defensive in the eastern Free State, with half the army of the republic, 4,500 men, surrendering in July at Brandwater Basin. In the Transvaal, Kruger also stood in crisis, obliged to surrender himself at Nelspruit, near the border with Portuguese East Africa, the bulk of the Transvaalers having already surrendered at Paardeberg, in late February, as discussed.

THE COUNTERINSURGENCY PHASE

As far as Marthinus Steyn and Christiaan de Wet were concerned, the war was not lost. One option remained to be exploited: guerrilla warfare. Thus, the conflict entered a period of transition between conventional fighting and the hit-and-run tactics already employed by de Wet. Indeed, evidence of the Boers' willingness to carry on the struggle quickly became obvious to Roberts, who appreciated that large areas in both republics remained beyond British control. In particular, his line of communication through the Orange Free State was inadequately defended and open to attack at numerous points. In addition, those Boer leaders who remained in the field were largely young, determined, imaginative, and, no longer obliged to defend the capitals, able to deploy the remaining commandos as guerrillas.

By this time there were perhaps only 25,000 Boers still offering resistance, but they were well mounted and elusive, with up to 400,000 square kilometers (about 150,000 square miles) in which to operate. They understood, moreover, the terrain far better than their adversaries, who continued to rely on the railway lines and larger towns for their supplies. Roberts could not completely control the countryside, a fact that left the British with an apparently insoluble problem—and one they would face on many future occasions in the numerous insurgencies of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Nevertheless, undaunted, Roberts undertook a concerted effort to quash the insurgency. First, he issued proclamations on May 31 and June 1, which meant to persuade the burghers (citizens) still in the field to hand in their weapons. Next, on June 16, he followed this up with a new, more drastic decree: if the Boers struck railway and telegraph lines and stations, troop would put to the torch homes and farms in the area. Such forms of retaliation had been pursued on an ad hoc basis since the beginning of the year; now Roberts made the practice official, providing a legal precedent for the more comprehensive "scorched earth" policy, which Kitchener would apply early the following year.

In the field itself, Roberts opened an offensive intended to drive the Free State forces eastward to trap them against the Basutoland border in a pincer movement during June and July 1900 in what became known as the "first De Wet Hunt." He took Bethlehem on July 7 and compelled the Free State forces to take refuge behind the Witteberg Range. De Wet and Steyn, with 2,000 men and the Free State government, managed to elude forces under Lieutenant General Sir Archibald Hunter, but Marthinus Prinsloo was forced to surrender about 4,400 men, half the remaining Free State forces, on July 30.

De Wet, meanwhile, showed himself a master of maneuver and deception, easily outwitting his pursuers as he escaped across the border into

the Transvaal, despite the fact that as many as 50,000 troops in converging columns sought to destroy him. Free State commandos all the while struck with considerable success against the railway lines, notably the line linking Potchefstroom and Krugersdorp. Superior scouting, firm discipline, and excellent mobility served de Wet extremely well, and he was also assisted by defects in British communications and intelligence gathering. De Wet was, nevertheless, nearly caught by approaching British columns in an encirclement at Magaliesburg while managing to escape across the mountains with his tiny force of 250 burghers in one of many daring operations. As a result of this first De Wet Hunt, Roberts's advance along the Delagoa railway was delayed for weeks while time and energy were devoted elsewhere to capturing that elusive commander.

Meanwhile, in the northwest, Botha was busy attempting to stem the British advance toward the Portuguese East Africa border, where Kruger had established his government in exile. The Boers could not resist for long, however. On August 27, combined forces under Roberts and Buller pierced their defenses at Bergendal and reached the frontier at Komatipoort, forcing Kruger to board a Dutch warship and go into exile on September 11, 10 days after the annexation of the Transvaal. Both republics had, in any event, decided to send Kruger to Europe to seek assistance from the major powers in an effort not merely to achieve peace but to preserve the independence of the Boer republics as well—clear evidence that, despite the poor odds, all was not lost. In Kruger's absence, Schalk Burger was appointed as acting president of the (now-defunct) Transvaal.

While an insurgency was now well underway, conventional operations had not quite ended. On June 11, Roberts attacked Botha's line of defense 30 kilometers (18 miles) east of Pretoria. The following day Hamilton pierced the Boer lines at Diamond Hill, near Donkerhoek, but Botha disappeared in the darkness, falling back east to protect his rear from Buller's columns approaching from Natal. When it was clear by the end of July that the first De Wet Hunt had failed, Roberts turned eastward to confront Botha. On August 15, Roberts and Buller joined up their troops at Ermelo, bringing the combined British force to 20,000, ready to oppose Botha's 5,000. Between August 21 and 27, the two sides fought a sharp action at Bergendal, where Roberts's artillery obliged Botha to retreat toward Lydenburg. With the arrival of British troops at Komatipoort on the border with Portuguese East Africa, Roberts theoretically controlled all of the Transvaal south of the Delagoa railway line. Yet this appearance of control was misleading. Beyond the garrison towns, outside the immediate reach of his troops, the commandos still roamed, and when British troops left an area, Boer authorities simply reinstated themselves.

Anxious to encourage large numbers of disaffected Cape Afrikaners to flock to the republican cause, de Wet invaded the Cape Colony in

November, forcing Roberts to divert troops from the Free State and Transvaal. Moving south with 1,500 men, de Wet captured the British garrison of 400 men at Dewetsdorp on November 23, prompting the "second De Wet Hunt," involving General Knox, with three flying columns and thousands of other troops sent by rail from the Transvaal. De Wet's operations in December proved disappointing, as heavy rains impeded movement. Nevertheless, he managed to elude his pursuers, most notably in a breakthrough at Sprinkannsnek, assisted by Commandant Gideon Scheepers, a Cape rebel who was later captured and executed by the British for murder, arson, and the ill-treatment of prisoners.

Employing both speed and surprise, even greater success was achieved when on the morning of December 13 at Nooitgedacht, 1,500 men under Major General Ralph Clements were surprised at a cliff's edge on the slopes of the Magaliesberg by Boer forces under Assistant Commandant-General Christiaan Beyers, de la Rey, and the newly appointed Jan Smuts, a distinguished Transvaal attorney destined to become one of the greatest Boer leaders. At a cost of 78 of their own men, the Boers inflicted over 300 casualties, captured about the same number of prisoners, as well as seized a substantial quantity of provisions, weapons, ammunition, and draft animals. The victory at Nooitgedacht reinvigorated the Boer cause, and as the year closed, Vecht-General Ben Viljoen captured the British garrison at Helvetia in a night attack on December 28–29. In the same month, Roberts, keen to take up his new post as commander in chief of the army in succession to Lord Wolseley, left for Britain in December and passed supreme command of forces in South Africa to Lord Kitchener, his chief of staff, who had 210,000 troops available to him.

KITCHENER IN COMMAND

Those Boers who remained in the field at the beginning of 1901 regrouped into small, mobile units and, eschewing all further conventional methods of warfare, pursued the irregular form to which they were naturally adept—and which alone offered the only hope of continuing the struggle. Accordingly, rather than confronting substantial British formations in the open, commandos struck at railway lines, ambushed supply columns, destroyed bridges, cut telegraph lines, raided depots, and cut up small British detachments through hit-and-run attacks. De Wet, operating in the Orange River Colony, in particular, epitomized this new strategy, and others did the same: Koos de la Rey and Jan Smuts in the western Transvaal and Louis Botha in the eastern part of the country. Even before Roberts had left South Africa, de Wet had kept over 30,000 British troops occupied in his pursuit across the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal for six weeks in July and August 1900. Now, in February 1901, he crossed

into Cape Colony in a bid to raise a revolt among the Afrikaners there, eluding numerous British columns for six weeks before retiring back into the Orange River Colony.

This form of fighting largely confounded British commanders, for while the army possessed extensive experience in confronting irregular colonial enemies across Africa and Asia and in New Zealand, none of those adversaries enjoyed the mobility of the Boers or their modern weaponry. Moreover, even by the beginning of 1901, the army remained woefully supplied and equipped for this form of warfare, being still short of mounted troops, and deploying scouts and intelligence gatherers across such a vast area as to achieve only extremely disappointing results. "As to our wandering columns," Captain March Phillipps recalled, "they have about as much chance of catching the Boers on the veldt as a Lord Mayor's procession would have of catching a highwayman on Hounslow Heath . . . [The Boers] are all around and about us like water round a ship, parting before our bows and reuniting round our stern. Our passage makes no impression and leaves no visible trace."[5]

Kitchener summed up the situation to William St. John Brodrick, secretary of state for war, thus:

> The difficulties of the present situation out here are that we have to protect very long lines of railway & road and supply garrisons to the many towns & villages that have been occupied all over the country whilst the mobile columns we have in the field are principally taken up in escorting supplies to the various garrisons. We have therefore no striking force of any importance & it is most difficult to find troops in any case of emergency such as the Cape Colony invasion for instance— If we withdraw garrisons it has a bad effect as the boers [*sic*] at once put up their flag and start a sort of government again.
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> I estimate there are still 20,000 boers [*sic*] out on commando in the two colonies. Some officers put the numbers considerably higher. These men are not always out on commando but return at intervals to their farms & live as most peaceful inhabitants, probably supplying the nearest British garrisons with forage milk & eggs until they are again called out to take the place of others in the field. Just now they apparently got these all out with the result that they suddenly show in considerable numbers and act with great boldness when they get a chance. Owing to the reactions of the country the boers [*sic*] can roam at pleasure and being excessively mobile they are able to surprise any post not sufficiently on the alert.
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> Every farmer is to them an intelligence agency & a supply depot so that it is almost impossible to surround or catch them. I sincerely hope the people of England will be patient. The boers [*sic*] trust to weary us out but of course time tells heavily against them.[6]

Frustration at his inability to achieve meaningful contact with the Boers in pitched battles in which the British would naturally hold the advantage, Kitchener adopted high-handed and unorthodox methods for

confronting the problem: targeting the civilian population that constituted the mainstay of the commandos' support. The counterinsurgency policies best associated with Kitchener's period as commander in chief in South Africa in fact began during Roberts's tenure, who had instituted a policy of collective punishment for Boer civilians living near areas of guerrilla activity. "Unless the people generally are made to suffer for the misdeeds of those in arms against us," Roberts had written in September 1900, "the war will never end."[7] Now, under Kitchener, denying the Boers their means of support translated into increasingly brutal methods as part of a three-pronged strategy of attrition: scorched earth, internment, and containment.

SCORCHED EARTH: FARM-BURNING AND THE SEIZURE AND DESTRUCTION OF LIVESTOCK

Finding himself unable to capture or eliminate the various guerrilla forces, Roberts had recognized that a systematic, methodical approach to counterinsurgency had to be adopted, and as early as June 1900 he had ordered the burning of farms known to be the property of Boers still on commando. This straightforward, brutal policy struck at the very heart of their means of supply, transit accommodation, and partial sources of intelligence. Kitchener now continued this process—though on a much larger scale—employing a full-scale scorched earth policy intended to lay waste all Boer farmsteads within the reach of his forces. Accordingly, both republics experienced wholesale devastation, with entire towns and thousands of farmsteads set aflame or otherwise rendered uninhabitable. The destruction of supplies of food, both in storage and still in the fields or pastures, was also paramount in a strategy meant to deprive the commandos of sustenance, intelligence, and temporary abodes. Troops slaughtered, seized, or drove off livestock in their hundreds of thousands—in such numbers, in fact that Boers in the Free State would in due course stand reduced to half their herds, with the situation even worse in the Transvaal. In addition, vast amounts of grain, stored or still in the field, disappeared in great columns of black smoke.

In November 1900, Captain Phillipps wrote from the Orange River Colony:

> Farm-burning goes merrily on, and our course through the country is marked as in prehistoric ages by pillars of smoke by day and fire by night. We usually burn from six to a dozen farms a day; these being about all that in this sparsely-inhabited country we encounter. I do not gather that any special reason or cause is alleged or proved against the farms burnt. If Boers have used the farm; if the owner is on commando; if the [railway] line within a certain distance has been blown up; or even if there are Boers in the neighbourhood who persist in

fighting—these are some of the reasons. Of course the people living in the farms have no say in these matters, and are quite powerless to interfere with the plans of the fighting Boers. Anyway, we find that one reason or another generally covers pretty nearly every farm we come to, and so to save trouble we burn the lot without enquiry; unless indeed, which sometimes happens, some names are given in before marching in the morning of farms to be spared.[8]

Later, while at Kronstadt, he related a specific case of farm-burning in which he took part:

I had to go myself the other day, at the General's bidding, to burn a farm near the line of march. We got to the place and I gave the inmates, three women and some children, ten minutes to clear their clothes and things out of the house, and my men then fetched bundles of straw and we proceeded to burn it down. The old grandmother was very angry. . . . Most of them, however, were too miserable to curse. The women cried and the children stood by holding on to them and looking with large frightened eyes at the burning house. They won't forget that sight, I'll bet a sovereign, not even when they grow up. We rode away and left them, a forlorn little group, standing among their household goods—beds, furniture, and grimcracks strewn about the veldt; the crackling of the fire in their ears, and smoke and flame streaming overhead. The worst moment is when you first come to the house. The people thought we had called for refreshments, and one of the women went to get milk. Then we had to tell them that we had come to burn the place down. I simply didn't know which way to look.[9]

Such destruction began on a relatively small scale, Kitchener reporting in February 1901 the burning of 256 farms in the Transvaal and 353 in the Orange Free State,[10] but by the end of the war approximately 30,000 farmsteads had been reduced to ashes and many villages entirely destroyed by fire, prompting Ramsay MacDonald, a British politician who visited Lindley in the Free State shortly after the end of hostilities, to observe grimly:

It was as though I had slept among ancient ruins of the desert. Every house, without a single exception was burnt; the church in the square was burnt. . . . Although taken and retaken many times, the place stood practically untouched until February 1902, when a British column entered it unmolested, found it absolutely deserted and proceeded to burn it. The houses are so separated from each other by gardens that the greatest care must be taken to set every one alight. From inquiries I made from our officers and from our host, who was the chief intelligence officer for the district, there was no earthly reason why Lindley should have been touched. . . . The whole journey was through a land of sorrow and destruction, of mourning and hate.[11]

INTERNMENT: THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

The second strand of Kitchener's strategy involved internment on a massive scale—a policy directly related to farm-burning, since by doing

so the authorities had either to leave women, children, and old men to manage for themselves as best they could amidst the unforgiving veldt or to somehow rehouse them. Although some civilians found refuge in other farms, walked to the nearest town, or found safety in an African kraal, the authorities soon appreciated that these internally displaced refugees—deprived of their livelihoods on British initiative and their numbers rapidly increasing as their homes went up in flames—could not be abandoned to wander in the open, exposed to the elements. To Kitchener, Boer women posed as much as a threat to his military efforts as their menfolk under arms. By clearing them from the countryside, he reckoned he would deny Boer commandos of sustenance and sources of intelligence, adversely affecting them at the tactical level and thus, at the strategic level, obliging them to abandon the war. "The women question is always cropping up and is most difficult," he declared five days into his new posting. "There is no doubt the women are keeping up the war and are far more bitter than the men."[12]

By allowing women to remain on their farms, they offered the enemy benefits in terms of intelligence and supplies. The British solution, ostensibly humanitarian, was simple and brutal: after destroying their homes, loading them onto wagons and moving them to makeshift "refugee camps," later known as "concentration camps." Kitchener's circular memorandum inaugurated this as official policy on December 21, 1900:

> The General Commanding-in-Chief is desirous that all possible means shall be taken to stop the present guerrilla warfare.
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> Of the various measures suggested for the accomplishment of this object, one which has been strongly recommended, and has lately been successfully tried on a small scale, is the removal of all men, women and children, and natives from the districts which the enemy's bands persistently occupy. This course has been pointed out by surrendered burghers, who are anxious to finish the war, as the most effective method of limiting the endurance of guerrillas, as the men and women left on farms, if disloyal, willingly supply. Burghers, if loyal, dare not refuse to do so. Moreover, seeing the unprotected state of women now living out in the districts, this course is desirable to ensure their not being insulted or molested by natives. . . .
>
> It should be clearly explained to Burghers in the field, that if they voluntarily surrender, they will be allowed to live with their families in the Camps until it is safe for them to return to their homes.
>
> With regard to natives, it is not intended to clear Kafir [*sic*] Locations, but only such Kafirs [*sic*] and their stock as are on Boer farms.[13]

The army held initial responsibility for the nine camps established by the end of 1900, but within a few months this responsibility passed into the hand of civilian authorities. These makeshift facilities housed both displaced civilians and the families of *hensoppers* who feared reprisals by

those still prepared to resist. Needless to say, the military authorities had no experience of managing the welfare of civilians under such circumstances or on such a scale; predictably, conditions deteriorated because of overcrowding and inadequate supplies of food and water. Basic standards of hygiene and sanitation could not be met: latrines often consisted of unemptied buckets of waste left to bake for hours in the sun, while a woeful absence of medical care compounded the crisis created by malnutrition and disease, causing the mortality rate to spiral. When the secretary of state for war, William St. John Brodrick, wrote to Kitchener in January 1901 indicating the general awareness of conditions in the camp at Bloemfontein and ordering a report, Kitchener disingenuously replied that all was well. Besides, British authorities in South Africa justified the camps' existence on the basis of military and humanitarian necessity.

The camps found recent precedent in the person of the notorious Spanish general, Valeriano Weyler, who during the Cuban insurrection of 1896–97 had established barbed-wire compounds, behind which 20,000 internees had died.[14] British camps consisted of rows of canvas tents and little else—with no proper protection from the extremes in temperature. The administrators assigned by the army to cope with this massive undertaking generally possessed no understanding of the task before them, in particular the acute danger of typhoid in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions. Although some camp commandants made the best of a bad situation, many, either through incompetence, negligence, or just plain heartlessness, consigned thousands of civilians, white and black, to a miserable end.

The scandalous conditions of these camps soon became known outside South Africa, thanks to Emily Hobhouse,[15] the 40-year-old daughter of a Cornish rector who, alarmed by stories of civilian distress, obtained sponsorship from a relief society and on her own initiative set out to visit some of the camps in the Orange River and Cape Colonies. Horrified by what she saw, she drew up a report of her findings that led to radical improvement in camp conditions and ultimately saved thousands of lives. Supported by the Committee of the Distress Fund for South African Women and Children, Hobhouse, unfairly branded a "pro-Boer" by dint of her vociferous yet peaceful antiwar campaigning, set out at the end of 1900 with supplies to be distributed among the camps. On arriving in South Africa she received permission to undertake this work from Kitchener and from Sir Alfred Milner, governor of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colonies, and promptly left for Bloemfontein with £200 worth of food and as much clothing as she could take. Unaware of the true extent of the suffering, Hobhouse initially believed she was bringing gifts to those in need rather than in excessive distress. It was not long before she appreciated the full horror of the camps, with the scale of the suffering

truly shocking. On January 26, 1901 she reached a camp on the exposed veldt at Bloemfontein, which she graphically described thus:

> Imagine the heat outside the tents, and the suffocation inside! We sat on their khaki blankets, rolled up, inside Mrs. Botha's tent; and the sun blazed through the single canvas, and flies lay thick and black on everything—no chair, no table, nor any room for such; only a deal box, standing on its end, served as a wee pantry. In this tiny tent live Mrs. Botha, five children (three quite grown up) and a little Kaffir servant girl. Many tents have more occupants. . . . Wet nights the water streams down through the canvas and comes flowing in (as it knows how to do in this country) under the flap of the tent, and wets their blanket as they lie on the ground.[16]

The numerous occupants, moreover, had to share inadequate rations. A few days later Hobhouse discovered ". . . a girl of twenty-one lay dying on a stretcher. The father, a big, gentle Boer, kneeling beside her; while, next tent, his wife was watching a child of six, also dying, and one of about five drooping."[17] Hobhouse moved on to inspect other camps, including Norval's Pont, Aliwal North, Springfontein, Kimberley, and Mafeking. Almost everywhere she encountered squalid conditions, varying according to the location of the camp; availability of food, water, and fuel; the attitude and abilities of the commandant; and a host of other factors. In general, however, she found appalling conditions of overcrowding, woefully inadequate sanitation, poor food, tainted water supplies, and insufficient medical care, not to mention the less critical matters such as the absence of beds, furniture, and schooling for the children. She returned to Bloemfontein camp on April 22, only to discover that the population had doubled in size to nearly 4,000 people in the six weeks since her first visit. The Springfontein camp had grown six times from 500 to 3,000 internees, with hundreds more on the way. The authorities were simply unable to cope with the growing numbers.

Hobhouse was particularly moved by the suffering of children, whose rising mortality rates could largely be attributed to disease and malnutrition. In a letter home, she described the death of an infant whose mother had fashioned a makeshift tent out of a strip of canvas to shield her sick child. "The mother," Hobhouse wrote:

> sat on her little trunk, with the child across her knee. She had nothing to give it and the child was sinking fast. . . . There was nothing to be done and we watched the child draw its last breath in reverent silence. The mother neither moved nor wept, it was her only child. Dry-eyed but deathly white she sat there motionless looking not at the child but far far away into the depths of grief beyond tears. A friend stood behind her who called upon Heaven to witness the tragedy, and others crouching on the ground around her wept freely. The scene made an indelible impression on me.[18]

Hobhouse fought hard to draw the attention of the military authorities to the most immediate needs of the internees: better facilities, food, medicines, clothing, soap, and every manner of basic amenity and comfort. Unable to secure these changes, she decided to return home to publicize her findings and exert pressure directly on the government. She sailed for Britain on May 7, unaware that the evidence she had gathered in South Africa would prove the catalyst for real change. Already there had been questions in Parliament. In March, two members of Parliament had referred to concentration camps, and bowing reluctantly to pressure, the government released statistics on the numbers of internees in April and May 1901: 21,000 in the Transvaal camps, 20,000 in the Orange River Colony, and 2,500 in Natal. All told, there were approximately 60,000 interned civilians. No clear figures could be provided for the number of fatalities, nor could officials confirm the number of blacks held in camps of their own: the British policy of racial segregation demanded that Boers and blacks be kept in separate camps.

Hobhouse published her report in June. It contained stark and unexaggerated facts. Her tone was moderate and her recommendations compelling. She had the sense to reserve her bombastic attacks for her private interviews and personal letters. The report caused an uproar, stirred the hearts of thousands, and attracted the attention of many prominent politicians, who roundly condemned the policies behind scorched earth and the concentration camps, policies described by the antiwar leader of the opposition party, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, as "methods of barbarism,"[19] while his colleague, David Lloyd George, accused the government of pursuing "a policy of extermination" against women and children. Brodrick, on behalf of the government, defended such policies, explaining that the guerrillas had forced upon the army the necessity of their "sweeps" across the countryside. The only method of protecting families rested in housing them in camps where they could avoid starvation on the veldt. He asserted that conditions in the camps were on the rise and mortality rates on the decline. "It is urged that we have not done sufficient to make these camps sanitary, and to preserve human life. I deny it altogether."[20]

Immediately forced on to the defensive, the government could no longer ignore the issue. Public opinion had been aroused, and although the government continued to insist that the camps served a dual military and humanitarian role—at once denying the guerrillas their sources of support while feeding and housing those whose homes by necessity had been destroyed—it was compelled to institute effective changes to what was increasingly seen as an odious system. In addition, the government, yielding to Hobhouse's suggestions, appointed Millicent Fawcett to head a women's commission, which was to travel to South Africa and report on the state of the camps. Hobhouse was specifically excluded because

of the "sympathy" she had shown to the Boers. Yet, undeterred by this snub, she decided to continue to monitor improvements for herself and returned to South Africa in October. Kitchener, citing martial law, refused her permission to land and had "that bloody woman" forcibly transferred to a troopship for deportation.

The numbers of civilians in the camps only increased as Kitchener's sweeps continued. The population of the camps in August 1901 stood at 105,000 whites and 32,000 blacks, and as a result of unsanitary conditions, epidemics of typhoid and measles broke out, increasing the number of deaths from 2,666 in August to 2,752 in September and 3,205 in October. The government did not take remedial action until the beginning of 1902 when the Fawcett Commission's report, issued the previous December, condemned the camps and their administration on a range of shocking defects—and thus vindicated Hobhouse's earlier findings. As a result, by the end of the war the death rate in the camps fell to only 2 percent—though not before many thousands had already succumbed.

Kitchener's attitude toward the camps is instructive, for however horrific their conditions, he clearly did not relish their existence, regarded them as reasonably well maintained, and several times expressed his desire for their closure if some viable alternative could be found. Having, with Milner's approval, passed the administration of the camps to civil authorities in early March, he justified their existence to Brodrick:

> The refugee camps for women and surrendered boers [*sic*] are I am sure doing good work. It enables a man to surrender and not lose his stock and moveable property which are otherwise confiscated by the boers [*sic*] in the field. The women left on farms give complete intelligence to the boers [*sic*] of all our movements and feed the commandos in their neighbourhood. Where they are brought in to the railway they settle down and are quite happy.[21]

Kitchener's position remained consistent over time, though he several times expressed his desire for the camps' closure, as a letter of May 9 reveals:

> We are really doing all we can for the burgher camps and I hope soon to be able to let the surrendered burghers take their cattle to the bush veldt—I do not think people from England would be of any use or help to the families in camps as they already have a number of people looking after them but funds might help them if properly administered. I wish I could get rid of these camps but it is the only way to settle the country and enable the men to leave their commandos and come in to their families without being caught and tried for desertion.[22]

Having said this, Kitchener's views on the ultimate fate of at least the hostile portion of the Boer population extended into quite radical bounds.

If his advocacy for the execution of Cape rebels, whom he described as "merely brigands and murderers"[23] did not raise eyebrows, some of his other proposals raised a host of ethical questions, such as his scheme of offering Boer leaders a month's notice in which to surrender themselves on penalty of the confiscation of their property. He asserted privately to Lord Milner that "... everyone out here considers confiscation the only chance of bringing these people to their senses."[24] He further contended that the only truly effective method of ensuring long-term peace was to resettle the belligerent element of the population abroad, either in the Dutch East Indies (later Indonesia), in the French colony of Madagascar, or on the British-controlled island of Fiji. "I could send their families and so clear the burgher camps," he wrote to Roberts on June 14, "and we should be relieved of a bad and dangerous lot."[25]

By the end of June, Kitchener estimated that he controlled more than half the Boer population—either as prisoners of war or as incarcerated in concentration camps—and recommended to his political superiors in London that neither category of detainees should be allowed to return to their farmsteads upon release, thus ensuring the end of any prospect of future conflict with the Boers and allowing space for future British colonization. Moreover, while he privately asserted to Brodrick that "Everything that is possible is being done" for camp inmates,[26] some of the views contained in his private correspondence displayed a strong degree of contempt for the Afrikaner strain of South African society. "These boers [*sic*] are uncivilized Africander [*sic*] savages with only a thin white veneer," he wrote in a private letter to Brodrick. "The people who have lived all their lives with them have only seen the veneer," he continued:

> hence they have no idea what brining up in this wild country has produced, savages. The boer [*sic*] woman in the refugee camp who slaps her protruding belly at you, and shouts "when all our men are gone these little Khakies will fight you" is a type of the savage produced by generations of wild lonely life. Back in their farms and their life on the veldt they will be just as uncivilized as ever, and a constant danger. Change their country and they may become civilized people fit to live with.[27]

Kitchener's aversion to the Boers went so far as to persuade him of the veracity of groundless claims made by British medical authorities in the concentration camps that Boer mothers were willfully causing the deaths of their own children as a consequence of "criminal neglect"—a disgraceful attempt to justify the horrendous health catastrophe caused by administrators themselves—and prompting Kitchener to consider the women's prosecution for manslaughter.[28]

CONTAINMENT: BLOCKHOUSE, BARBED WIRE, AND KITCHENER'S "DRIVES"

Kitchener's great "drives"—some over 80 kilometers (50 miles) long—constituted the third element of his strategy to cope with the guerrillas and finish the war. As he understood that he could neither catch nor destroy the remaining commandos without placing strict limits on their freedom of movement, Kitchener inaugurated a construction program that established a network of light fortifications ultimately consisting of hundreds of blockhouses and thousands of miles of barbed-wire fencing established across wide stretches of the veldt—crisscrossing the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies like a spider's web—all for the purpose of restricting and channeling the Boers' movements and thus trapping them in great drives—not unlike a gigantic pheasant hunt—meant to confine them to areas where they could be captured or killed.

Roberts had first ordered the construction of blockhouses in March 1900 to protect the Cape Town-Bloemfontein railway, on which he relied for his supplies. But defending vulnerable targets such as railways, roads, and towns was not enough: the insurgents' freedom of movement now had to be impeded as much as possible. Blockhouses, initially rectangular and built of stone, were ultimately round and made of layers of corrugated iron packed with earth between them, covered with stout tin roofs, and protected by trenches and barbed wire. Strong enough to withstand rifle fire, once erected in sufficient numbers and linked by thousands of miles of barbed-wire fencing, they became an elaborate network spanning wide areas of the former Boer republics. By the end of the war, blockhouse chains extended for 6,000 kilometers (3,700 miles), consisting of 8,000 blockhouses garrisoned by over 50,000 men.

Kitchener's first large-scale drive opened on January 28, 1901, involving seven columns, in total 14,000 men and 58 guns, moving through the Transvaal between the Delagoa and Natal railway lines. Facing vastly superior numbers, most of the commandos fell back without a fight and managed to break through the lines, behind which they were largely safe. Thus, initially, such tactics produced few tangible military benefits. "It is a most difficult problem," Kitchener admitted in February 1901, "an enemy that always escapes, a country so vast that there is always room to escape, supplies such as they want abundant almost everywhere."[29] Nonetheless, in the areas increasingly cordoned off by blockhouse and barbed wire, the Boers encountered total devastation, rendering subsistence in the field extremely difficult. By the time Kitchener's forces eventually reached the Natal border in mid-April, they had swept the veldt clean of civilians and had laid waste to the landscape—albeit with scarcely any impact on the commandos. Only a handful, known as "hands-uppers," had

voluntarily surrendered to the British. Some went so far as to change sides—the "joiners"—while those who doggedly remained on commando came to be known as "bitter-enders." Kitchener's radical approach to the guerrilla problem proved counterproductive, at least at the outset, for it hardened the resolve of the bitter-enders to carry on in spite of the sufferings of Boer civilians and released them from the responsibility of having to protect their properties and loved ones.

At the same time as Kitchener was executing his drive through the Transvaal, de Wet launched his second invasion of the Cape. Kitchener sent 14,000 troops by rail and road in over a dozen flying columns against a Boer force of 3,000 in the "third De Wet Hunt." But de Wet's hit-and-run tactics kept the British confused as to his location and direction of movement. He still managed to sever lines of communication, strike at convoys, and tear up railway lines, to the great consternation of his opponents. He then escaped across the Orange River near Philippolis on February 10—but not before his men and horses had suffered badly from privation and fatigue. Worse still, this second invasion had totally failed in its objectives. De Wet's men were quite exhausted, and Cape Afrikaners had not joined his force in large numbers. De Wet would, hereafter, remain on the defensive, though others, such as Assistant Chief Commandant P. H. Kritzinger, another effective guerrilla leader, led their own forays. Having met with considerable success after crossing into the Cape Colony in December 1900, he conducted a second raid in May 1901 and later a third, which ended in his capture. During his operations, Kritzinger had ruthlessly executed any blacks found working for the British. Though he was put on trial for murder, he was subsequently acquitted.

The lull in fighting that occurred in the Orange River Colony in the middle of March as a result of British forces dispersing de Wet's commandos enabled Kitchener to reorganize his mobile columns in that theatre of operations. Without altering the deployment of troops involved in guarding lines of communications in the Orange River Colony, Kitchener subdivided the colony into four districts, each commanded by a general officer with responsibility for reacting rapidly to any concentration effected by the Boers and systematically to clear the countryside of all horses, cattle, and supplies.[30]

Space precludes a comprehensive examination of Kitchener's operations and drives, but a snapshot of small periods of 1901 provides a general impression of their tenor. His principal concern lay in the sheer elusiveness of his enemy, and the fact that notwithstanding Boer losses of 1,000 fighters a month, they continued to refuse peace without the restoration of their independence. "It is a most difficult problem," he complained to Brodrick in early February, "an enemy that always escapes, a country as vast that there is always room to escape, supplies such as

they want abundant almost everywhere." Kitchener appreciated the benefits derived from the continuing influx of reinforcements but lamented how such a vast and punishing theatre of operations simply swallowed them up and caused substantial wastage to men and horses. "It all seems endless," he wrote on February 1, "and I do not know how to answer your telegram asking for even an approximate time when this war would be over."[31] The financial strain of the war—with an expected expenditure of £60 million for the coming year, a figure Brodrick later modified to £88 million—now threatened to affect operations in the field.[32]

In March, troops made significant progress in clearing commandos from Cape Colony, capturing both men and horses in growing numbers, but Kitchener admitted to Roberts that bringing an end to the war would constitute "a very long business."[33] He appreciated that attrition offered the only answer to an otherwise intractable situation. Writing to Brodrick, he explained: "The difficult problem is to see how to get any finality to this war . . . and I can find no infallible solution other than exhaustion."[34] Still, his men were coping increasingly well, for the fitness and well-being of the troops "played out" at the point of Roberts's departure had now recovered; indeed, the men were eager for the fight. This circumstance, in combination with the arrival of reinforcements, cast a more positive light on prospects.[35]

Accordingly, in the course of March and April 1901, Kitchener conducted a number of operations. In southeastern Orange River Colony, British and colonial troops advanced north, encountering slight opposition, Kitchener explaining in a dispatch to the War Office on May 8 how "The Boers, following the tactics which have frequently enabled them to evade our columns during recent operations, dispersed and broke back, abandoning their stock." Nonetheless, by March 20, the columns had taken 70 prisoners, 4,300 horses, and numerous transport oxen.[36]

In the eastern part of the Orange River Colony, a column under General Rundle left Harrismith on April 19, bound for Bethlehem, where it arrived on the 24th. En route he clashed with various hostile bands, in all numbering around 300 men, who continuously remained along the flanks of Rundle's force, which spent four days around Bethlehem, passed Retief's Nek on the 29th, reached the Brandwater Basin unopposed, and entered Fouriesburg on May 2. Having concluded "extensive clearing operations" in the area around that town, Rundle proceeded to scour the surrounding countryside with his "flying" columns.[37]

In the Transvaal, General French's lightly equipped, fast columns operated near the border with Zululand, pursuing and engaging commandos wherever encountered, Kitchener claiming that "The energy and persistence with which these operations were carried out caused great demoralization among the Boers, who had moved for safety into these almost

impassable districts." The cull amounted to 200 burghers who crossed into Zululand where they surrendered to local magistrates. Moreover, in the operations following French's arrival at Piet Retief, the columns under his command succeeded in killing or wounding 73 Boers and capturing 56 men, while another 175 burghers surrendered themselves voluntarily. They also netted masses of animals and equipment: one 15-pounder gun, three pom-poms, 496 rifles, 19,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 534 wagons and carts, 1,016 horses, 250 mules, and numerous oxen.[38]

Elsewhere in the Transvaal, Colonels Campbell and Allenby, each in command of separate columns, both engaged strong bodies of Boers beginning on April 18, driving off forces that had been constantly harassing their movements. But the Boers had not surrendered the initiative and carried out operations of their own, such as on March 3, when Generals de la Rey and Jan Smuts, together with Commandant Hendrik Vermaas, with a force of 1,500 men and one gun, vigorously attacked Lieutenant Colonel C. G. Money's garrison of Lichtenberg at 3 a.m. in a fight lasting until midnight, after which the Boers withdrew, repulsed with losses of 60 dead and wounded and seven prisoners. The garrison suffered 16 killed and 26 wounded. Other Boer forays included an attack by de la Rey with 500 men and three guns near Geduld on March 22 against a strong patrol of the 1st Imperial Light Horse, consisting of 200 men and a pom-pom. The Boers failed, losing 11 killed and 13 wounded, with Commandant Venter among the dead and Field Cornet Wolmarans severely wounded and taken prisoner.[39]

Other examples of British pursuit included General James Babington's operations in the Transvaal. On March 23, moving northward, he drove a Boer force before him while at the same time Colonel Shekleton operated against the Boer right flank. Making use of mounted troops and guns only, Babington continued his pursuit on the following day, overtaking the Boer rear guard and driving it off at Zwartlaagte, thereby denying the Boers the respite they badly needed to cover the withdrawal of their convoy. When they assumed a second position a few miles further north, a New Zealand force under Lieutenant Colonel Grey duly broke through to the convoy from both flanks, forcing the Boers to abandon their guns and wagons and flee in confusion, pursued by Babington's troops, who killed 22 Boers and wounded 32, took 140 prisoners, two 15-pounder guns, one pom-pom, six Maxim machine guns, 160 rifles, 320 rounds of 15-pounder ammunition, 15,000 rounds of rifle ammunition, 53 wagons, and 24 carts, at the cost of only two killed and seven wounded.[40]

When General Babington learned that de la Rey had concentrated about 2,000 of his troops in the hills around Hartbeesfontein, he ordered a movement to Syferkuil, the town he established as a base from which to operate against the commandos operating in that area. On March 22, near Brakspruit, 700 Boers vigorously attacked a convoy moving between

Babington's camp and Klerksdorp. The escort managed to repel the attack, killing 12 Boers and wounding six.[41]

Elsewhere in the Transvaal, General Plumer, operating in the area around Pietersburg, in the course of two weeks in April took 91 prisoners; accepted the voluntary surrender of 20 personnel; and captured one Maxim machine gun, 20,360 rounds of ammunition, 26 wagons and carts, and 46 mules. In the course of March and April 1901, Lieutenant General Sir Bindon Blood, operating north of the eastern railway line in the Transvaal, took 1,081 Boers, who either surrendered in the field or voluntarily turned themselves in. His forces also captured one 1-pounder Krupp gun complete with 100 rounds of ammunition, one pom-pom, 540 rifles, 204,450 rounds of ammunition, 247 horses, and 611 wagons and carts. To avoid their capture, the Boers blew up one "Long Tom" (heavy artillery piece), one 4.7-inch gun (captured from the British at Helvetia), one 15-pounder gun, one 12-pounder Krupp gun, two pom-poms,[42] and two Maxim machine guns. Thereafter, Plumer concentrated his forces and marched along the line of the Elands and Kameel rivers to Eerste Fabrieken. From Blood's column, Major General Stuart Beatson moved his force from Ewagen Drift up the left bank of the Wilge River toward Bronkhorst to cooperate with Plumer, but neither column encountered large bodies of Boers, such that only one commando, driven westward by a small force from Plumer's command, achieved anything of note: in this instance, 27 prisoners, 18 rifles, 30 wagons, and a thousand head of cattle.[43]

Elsewhere, Lieutenant Colonel Plumer enjoyed a series of successes. Beginning on the night of April 26, he encountered a Boer laager at Klipdam and attacked it at dawn the following day, losing only a single man wounded, while inflicting much heavier losses on the Boers: seven killed, 41 captured, and the capture of the vehicles, animals, and other items found in their camp, consisting of 26 horses, 10 mules, numerous wagons and carts, and 76,000 rounds of ammunition.[44] Later, with intelligence received of the Boers' last Long Tom at Berg Plaats, about 32 kilometers (20 miles) east of Pietersburg on the road to Haernertsberg, Kitchener ordered Grenfell to endeavor to capture it. Advancing immediately, at dawn on April 30, he occupied Doornhoek before proceeding to Berg Plaats. Perceiving the British approach, the Boers commenced firing at a range exceeding 10,000 yards, but after discharging 16 rounds they blew up the gun while Grenfell's men were still about 3,000 yards' distance and retreated in a northeast direction. Grenfell, at a cost to himself of only two wounded, took 10 prisoners and 35 rounds of Long Tom ammunition. A thorough subsequent search of a farm at Bergvlei, near Berg Plaats, revealed a cache of 100,000 rounds of Martini-Henry ammunition, which Grenfell's men destroyed. Using Bergvlei as a base, Grenfell then continued to operate for several days, a detachment from his command of

mounted infantry under Major Thomson making use of the cover of thick fog to capture Commandant Marais and 40 of his men. When, together with Lieutenant Colonels Colenbrander and Wilson, the latter commanding "Kitchener's Fighting Scouts," returned to Pietersburg on May 6, Grenfell reported that altogether he had accounted for seven Boers killed, 129 prisoners taken in combat, 50 voluntary surrenders, and 240,000 rounds of ammunition destroyed.[45]

Once de Wet had been expelled from Cape Colony on February 28, operations could continue against the disparate commandos operating throughout the Transvaal under various commanders, "whose ability to keep the field against our troops," Kitchener explained to the War Office:

> is accounted for by the persistent way in which they avoid fighting and the manner in which they cling to the rugged and mountainous localities. These raiders have during the last two months undoubtedly received a certain number of recruits from amongst the Colonial Dutch [i.e. Boers living in Cape Colony], and the friendly feelings of a considerable portion of the rural population assure to them at all times not only an ample food supply, but also timely information of the movements of our pursuing columns, two points which tell heavily in their favour.[46]

Kitchener also reported on the "untiring valour" of the troops operating in central Transvaal, the efficient execution of orders sent to the various column commanders, and the growing effectiveness of the Colonial Defence Force, whose cooperation with regular army units gave promise of hindering Boer raiding, citing in particular the fact that 300 Boers were forced northward across the Orange River at Oudefontein Drift on April 3, while another commando of about equal strength abandoned its campaign in Cape Colony on May 1, crossing 13 kilometers (8 miles) west of Bethulie. Kitchener regarded both incidents as "a sign that the raiders are losing heart, and that the leaders are only able to retain in the field small bodies of desperate men, who are prepared to adapt themselves to the vicissitudes of guerrilla warfare and brigandage."[47]

At this time, Kitchener applied his scorched earth policy more intensively than ever and over an increasingly wider area, leaving those Boers still on the veldt during the winter (June–August) of 1901 critically short of food and shelter. The commandos began to operate less frequently, women and children often chose to live exposed on the veldt rather than face internment, and Boer forces were obliged to make up for shortages of food, weapons, ammunition, and clothing by seizing them from small British detachments at isolated posts. Some measures smacked of even greater desperation: without facilities for holding prisoners of war, the Boers had no option but to release their captives as soon as they were taken.

Acting president Burger and other members of the Transvaal government began to lose heart. President Steyn, of the Free State, on the other hand, together with de Wet and de la Rey, urged resistance to the last man when on June 20 they all gathered at Waterval. Steyn, de Wet, and de la Rey eventually convinced Burger to hold firm, and Boer leaders planned a new invasion of the Cape Colony to try to divert Kitchener's attention away from his drives to the north. Kitchener, for his part, issued a proclamation on August 7, demanding that Boer officers surrender their firearms by September 15 or suffer permanent banishment from South Africa and the confiscation of their property. In the event, few burghers laid down their arms.

Smuts's invasion of the Cape in September 1901 graphically demonstrated that several thousand bitter-enders remained at large. First moving into the Eastern Cape almost as far as Port Elizabeth on the coast, Smuts then turned west and proceeded into the southeastern districts before heading north and northwest, where he linked up with other commandos and took several towns near O'Okiep in April 1902. Cape authorities imposed martial law, seized livestock from rebel farms, and rounded up those suspected of collaboration. In the course of the war, about 13,000 Cape rebels—about 10 percent of the white population—joined the Boer cause, and somewhat more volunteered to serve on the British side as either police or mounted troops. Many other Cape Afrikaners who did not themselves take up arms did offer some assistance to Smuts's men and other raiders, to whom of course they were bound by common culture and language.

Kitchener could report a fair degree of progress by early May. The South African Constabulary were now establishing large numbers of posts and protected areas into which surrendered Boers could return to their farms. The value of this was obvious, as Kitchener explained: "... the irreconcilables will see that ordinary life is going on in spite of all their efforts." Other semblances of normality were returning to the veldt: Kitchener restarted the mines around Johannesburg at the beginning of May, hoping this would dampen the morale of those still on commando, while attacks on railway lines had greatly decreased as a consequence of the growing efficacy of blockhouses and the gradually expanding wire barriers that the Boers found almost impossible to cross, dividing up, as they did, territory that Kitchener planned gradually to clear.[48] On May 24, Kitchener informed Roberts of progress respecting further blockhouse construction: "By fortifying and increasing our posts on the railway lines they form barriers which the Boers cannot cross without being engaged. I am getting blockhouses at every 2500 yards and at night parties from each meet and sleep out between, waiting for any attempt to cross. This has proved very successful. The Eastern and Natal lines are complete and the others will soon be so."[49] By mid-June,

moreover, the South African Constabulary posts were demonstrating their effectiveness, and in the Cape, small bands were being cleared and the colonial defense force proving itself increasingly competent.[50] Having said this, Kitchener was not terribly impressed by the comparisons between locally raised (largely Anglo-stock) forces and their Boer counterparts: "The South African white (Cape or Natal colonists or Transvaal uitlanders) is very inferior to the boers [*sic*], both in knowledge of the country, capability of standing hardship, and hard work, and in guts and determination."[51]

The strategic picture in mid-1901 therefore remained mixed, with Kitchener ambivalent about the prospect of an early end to the war:

> I wish I could tell you when the end of the war would come. We are nearer to it that is all I can say. I much dread the war degenerating into the uncontrolled brigandage which might take a very long time to suppress and cause incalculable damage to the country and enormous expense, hence my desire for terms with Botha who could control the enemy's forces, however that is probably all over now and how it will end I cannot see.[52]

Later that month he was equally pessimistic, stating: "We are working away as hard as we can to enclose and catch the boers, but it is difficult work and they have got remarkably cute lately."[53]

Compounding his travails in the field, Kitchener felt himself under pressure from London, for the government began to express anxieties for an end to hostilities, not least to alleviate the Treasury from the enormous financial burden imposed by a war of far greater duration than anyone had anticipated. Brodrick went so far as to state the Cabinet's interest in a scheme by which the army should drive most of the last marauding commandos north of the Vaal River and thereafter declare the war over in the Transvaal, Cape Colony, and Natal, leaving all remaining opposition in the Orange River Colony designated and punishable as brigandage. "We feel," he stated on behalf of the cabinet, "that some point of this kind must be looked to as neither finance nor policy would permit us to maintain 250,000 men in the Colonies indefinitely."[54] Still, Brodrick was doing his utmost to stave off the demands of his colleagues for retrenchment through the recall of some of the troops in South Africa. "I am doing my best to keep down expenditure," Kitchener wrote in response on June 7, "but it is no easy task and I do not see my way to do much more in any large war."[55] He also promised to send home as many men as he could spare, but by doing so he believed this would only prolong the war.[56] Now was not the time to slacken the pressure, Kitchener argued: "Everything seems to look better and to show that the end is not far off. Our columns are pressing them everywhere and they have no rest and no fight left in them . . . the exhausting process is going on steadily."[57]

But the summer of 1901 proved one of mixed results, and while matters improved for the British, few could doubt the longevity of coming operations. "The war drags on without any definite signs of soon ending," Kitchener wrote despairing to Roberts on June 14. "I wish I could see an end to it, but this process of exhaustion must in such a country as this be a long one. I do all I can and think all I know. I cannot see my way to do more."[58] Still, volunteer forces from Britain were now making some impact by this time. "The distribution of Yeomanry is complete," Kitchener reported. "They are doing well but are still green and therefore liable to more casualties than they should have. Another month will I expect make them all right."[59] Two weeks later he confided to Milner: "We are pegging away as hard as we can but the boers [*sic*] will not stand at all." The strain was beginning to show on Kitchener personally, who after five years of continuous service in the field—dating from his deployment to the Sudan in 1896 "... would give a good deal to sink into oblivion and peace."[60]

Yet he persevered: in the course of July, the army continued to fortify the railway lines with blockhouses with a view to reducing the numbers of troops defending the line, whose protection absorbed more soldiers than any other single undertaking in the theatre of war. Kitchener's view—one it must be said not shared by all his subordinates—that he would try to meet the government's request for limited troop reductions, left him in a quandary, prompting him to caution Brodrick that such a proceeding would produce mixed consequences. Fewer troops on the railways would free up space for consumer goods to reach the civilian population but in return for a deleterious impact on operations. "I hope you will remember," he wrote pointedly in early July, "that every man counts." In reality, this was not the time to contemplate troop reductions in South Africa, for Kitchener wildly underestimated the numbers of Boers still on commando—13,000 by his reckoning—when in fact the true figure almost certainly exceeded this by more than double. Still, he was correct in his assessment that he could relax restrictions on mining: "I am very grieved," he wrote privately to Brodrick on July 5:

> that we have not been able to absolutely end the war or rather the resistance to our rule which is more what is going on now than actual warfare, but I hope by the end of August we shall have rendered [i.e. weakened] the resistance so that with certain safeguards it may be ignored and the industries of the country may be again safely undertaken and developed.[61]

Still, all such positive news always carried a prudent caveat, and Kitchener duly warned—as was his wont—against overoptimism at home. "I have had so many disappointments I do not think it wise to count on an early finish."[62] Boer raids into Cape Colony in late July fully

justified that note of caution, prompting Kitchener strongly to advise that proposals for troop reduction remain in abeyance at least until such forays ceased. Boer surrenders might again be on the rise, and yet even as the Boers exhibited signs of exhaustion, so too did their pursuers. Moreover, the British faced the paradox that as their enemies declined in number, it became increasingly difficult to catch those who still remained in the field.[63]

Kitchener accordingly tightened the screws further when, on August 7, he issued a proclamation that gave Boer officers and government officials until September 15 to surrender, barring which they would be permanently banished from South Africa. This initiative achieved almost nothing; in fact, it proved rather counter-productive, encouraging rather than softening resistance. Kitchener, ironically, thought it not strong enough, maintaining that the Boers would simply await a new government in London to overturn the decision. "Confiscation is the only thing that will touch them," he declared to Roberts on August 9, adding:

> I quite understand that confiscation is repugnant to British lawyers, but in this war we had to do much that is repugnant to us all, and where the loss of many valuable lives and destruction of property can be avoided, I should [have] thought the Gov[ernment]t would have taken the only really effective course to stop the war.[64]

With the death of Queen Victoria in August, Kitchener took the opportunity to provide a précis of the situation on the ground to the new sovereign, King Edward VII:

> The enemy are in scattered parties of from 30 to 200 over an immense area, and sometimes in most difficult country, with which they are naturally thoroughly acquainted. These have be captured by Your Majesty[']s troops. They have excellent scouts and information and generally move away rapidly before our columns can get within 20 miles of them. At the same time if they get a chance at a weak party unsupported, or by any carelessness on our part, they take immediate advantage of it. Long railway lines have also to be thoroughly protected by the troops, and this is done by a system of blockhouses 1600 y[ar]ds apart, with men lying out at night between each blockhouse. There are now over 1500 blockhouses in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony for the protection of railways besides 61 mobile columns scouring the country in every direction. Some of these columns are specially fitted out to travel light and fast and have the boer [*sic*] leaders as their objective.[65]

By late August, the government had managed to persuade Kitchener that he would have to manage with almost 50,000 fewer troops—a reduction of 189,000 to 140,000—and requested that he release some of his senior commanders and staff officers, as well. To this, Kitchener strongly

objected. But if he faced frustrations generated by his superiors at home, by late August he was nevertheless beginning to see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, declaring in an extraordinary statement to Roberts on the 23rd: "One of the advantages of fighting this struggle out to the bitter end, as the boers [*sic*] seem determined to do, is that we shall require fewer troops to garrison the country when the war is over." Such were the words of a man determined to remain at the helm for the long haul—a position he clearly stated later in the same communication:

> I am afraid there is not much chance of the boers [*sic*] giving in on the last proclamation. They are quite impossible people to deal with and the only way will be to wear them out by continually catching their men and rendering the country uninhabitable. It is weary work but patience will eventually end the war: I do not see how anything else will do it. I look more to the numbers we kill or capture than to anything else.[66]

Appreciating more than ever the stark necessity that his troops endure long marches—or rather rides—Kitchener now redoubled his efforts, taking considerable pains to reduce the size of columns and to maximize their mobility and rendering them fit to undertake treks of 80 or 100 kilometers (50 or 60 miles) a day—and more—even for the sake of catching small groups of Boers. Experience had revealed that success, albeit accruing gradually, depended on men specifically trained and tasked for this arduous effort. "I have done all I can to render all columns more mobile," he explained to Brodrick on August 30. "I have also tried to get picked men for extra mobile columns with a definite objective and a free hand to follow up leads anywhere. It is found that definite corps or regiments are better for this work than mixed forces."[67]

By mid-September, Kitchener was aware from prisoners that the commandos were feeling the strain, being often kept continuously on the move—even at night. He was also in a position not only to allow more surrendered Boers to settle back into Johannesburg as a consequence of improved security along the railway lines but to open more mines—both initiatives representing the increasing emergence of normality. As for military affairs, he reported to Brodrick in mid-September that:

> We are constantly reducing the enemy forces, and they are becoming more and more discontented with their leaders; but I fear the war will go on until we reduce their numbers to a very small residue. I am glad to say our *bag*!!! [i.e., the number of prisoners] has not fallen off as [I] rather expected it would. Considerable areas are being entirely cleared and kept clear of boers [*sic*] & this makes them thicker in the positions they still occupy so that our columns get at them almost better than they did before as boers [*sic*] are forced out of their own country and hiding places. This process is naturally a very long one, and takes up a large number of troops, but satisfactory progress has been made and the results are rather better

than I anticipated. ... The troops are wonderfully fit and well & are never better than when out on the trek. ... Day after day they are at it and I never hear a grumble. I cannot speak too highly of the tone of the Army all through.[68]

By late September, if Kitchener had harbored any earlier doubts on this score, he was resigned to a strategy of attrition—reducing the Boers' numbers through the simple, but by no means effortless, expedients of time, patience, and exertion.[69] While he naturally found Boer raids into Natal and elsewhere disruptive to his own operations and necessarily lengthened the war, he had resigned himself to playing a long game, as he explained privately to Brodrick: "... the weekly drain must tell, and already some commando's [*sic*] are either reduced to impotence or wiped out altogether and a large tract of country is entirely in our hands and clear of boers [*sic*]."[70] The growing lines of blockhouses were contributing greatly to their decreasing freedom of movement. "I find this is the only way of making the country actually ours," he continued, "for even if the boers [*sic*] break through our lines in small parties, they are so chased and find no food or help that they have to surrender."[71] Nevertheless, even by the closing months of 1901, Kitchener perceived no definite signs of a capitulation:

they seem as fanatically disposed to continue the war as ever, and I fear it can only end by our catching all or almost all of them. It is hard work for our men and horses, and must take a considerable time. I think you ought to be prepared for this. ... I try all I can but it is not like the Soudan[72] and disappointments are frequent. You must remember that as we go on catching boers [*sic*], we weed them out, and the residue left in the field are generally their best men and therefore more difficult to deal with.[73]

By early November, the Boers had ceased to attack the railway lines as a consequence of the formidable protection offered by a combination of ubiquitous blockhouses, extensive wire fencing, and an enormous numbers of troops. Yet, as always, Kitchener's frustrations continued:

I wish I could find out some way of finishing the war; but it is really most difficult. We do all we can to capture the leaders but they are too well guarded to get them by surprise, and concentration of columns finds no one. It is really most disheartening, but by steady perseverance we must get them in time. I wish those that say the war ought to be over would come out and show us how to do it. ... We have all done our best and mean to stick to it and see this war through & I sincerely hope it will not be long before we see the end, no effort shall be spared to bring that about as soon as possible.[74]

In closely examining a discreet period of operations—this time toward the end of 1901—we may examine exactly how Kitchener proposed to "see this war through," as he described earlier.

By early November, Kitchener could confidently assert that while his troops in general sometimes failed to pin down Boer commandos, they were considerably hampering their movements, Brigadier General Bullock's column, for instance, obliging one small force to abandon all their wagons and two guns that the rebels had captured from the British at Blood River Poort.In Natal, although heavy and continuous rain and thick mist impaired the progress of columns operating there, the troops nonetheless exerted themselves hard to hunt down and clear the colony of scattered bands of Boers, against whom in numerous skirmishers 21 were killed and 11 wounded, 160 unwounded prisoners taken, as well as 8,600 rounds of small arms ammunition, 400 horses, 5,800 cattle, 165 wagons, 54 carts, and large quantities of food captured. This result, effectively achieving the objective for which reinforcements had been brought in to Natal in the course of September, enabled military authorities gradually to withdraw forces beginning on October 22.[75]

In northern Transvaal, on the basis of accurate intelligence, Lieutenant Colonel Colenbrander of Kitchener's Fighting Scouts captured a number of Boer supply depots, and during the course of his march took 45 prisoners of war, nearly 4,000 rounds of ammunition, and a very large number of cattle and wagons. Ten Boers voluntarily surrendered themselves. Lieutenant Colonel Dawkins, commanding another column, operated against small Boer commandos in the area west of the railway between Nylstroom and Geelhout Kop, such that by October 26, when he returned to Nylstroom, he had captured 97 prisoners of war, 237 rifles, 9,200 rounds of ammunition, 850 cattle, 20 wagons, and some horses. Elsewhere in the Transvaal, Lieutenant Colonel J. Byng, who left Kroonstadt on October 6, rapidly became engaged with a Boer force under van Niekerk and Spanneberg. On the 13th, Byng attacked a laager at Jackfontein, taking 18 prisoners and some horses. Halting at Klerksdorp for provisions, on the 25th Byng began his return to Kroonstadt and recrossed the Vaal River, where he surrounded Spanneberg's laager at Huntersvlei, taking Field Cornets Spanneberg and Oosthuyzen and 20 burghers. The British column captured another 11 prisoners near Plessis Rust by the time it had reached Vredefort Road on November 1.[76]

Meanwhile, Major Damant at Frankfort, and Lieutenant Colonel Wilson at Heilbron, in tandem with their own active operations, continued to offer protection to engineers as they completed construction of the line of blockhouses dotted between those two towns. On October 13, Damant engaged 300 Boers near Naudesdrift on the Wilge River, and two days later encountered a commando numbering 500 men under Commandants Ross and Hattingh, whom he pursued toward the Bothasberg. By the time Damant reached Frankfort on the 25th, his haul consisted of 19 prisoners, 13 vehicles, 40 horses, and 500 cattle captured near Villiersdorp. Other minor night raids conducted by his men produced another 12 prisoners.[77]

Further operations in the Transvaal included columns led by Colonels Sir Henry Rawlinson and Rimington, which linked up on October 14 near Niemand's Kraal, and together pursued commandos toward the south, their chase netting 20 prisoners, 18 wagons, 21 carts, 66 horses, and over 2,800 cattle. Both columns then proceeded to Standerton, where they arrived on October 16–17.[78]

In southeastern Orange River Colony, columns under Major General Knox and Colonel Rochfort continued to operate from fixed positions, with the object of completely clearing the countryside there and capturing the roving Boers still operating in that area—the response to a perennial problem still plaguing British efforts, which Kitchener identified thus: "Small captures have been made, but the enemy's knowledge of the ground, evasive tactics, and powers of concealment have enabled him so far to avoid any serious loss." During the course of October, the troops operating in this area killed and wounded only seven Boers, though they captured 125.[79]

In the same month, in Cape Colony, columns under Lieutenant General French expelled raiding bands of Boers from the colony's central districts, thereby releasing considerable numbers of troops to be deployed against commandos operating in the southwest and northeast. Of various operations undertaken in Cape Colony, in mid-October columns under Colonel Haig and Lieutenant Colonel Lukin pursued a detachment under Van der Venter, with Lukin's troops surprising his laager 10 kilometers (6 miles) southwest of New Bethesda, at dawn on the 21st, killing one and taking 14 prisoners. In addition, in tandem with the work carried out by mobile columns, engineers constructed a line of blockhouses from De Aar to Beaufort West, designed to add considerable security to the main railway line there.[80]

Other elements of Kitchener's counterinsurgency policy manifested themselves in the form of his institution on October 9 of Martial Law at the Cape ports, designed to inhibit the ingress of supplies to the Boers while causing minimal disruption to the normal life of the residents in the colony as a whole, as Kitchener explained to the War Office:

> Whilst the regulations, agreed upon by the Colonial Government and myself, have been framed with a view to minimizing interference with legitimate trade, and preventing unnecessary inconvenience to the law-abiding portion of the community, adequate powers have at length been secured for the military authorities to enable them to deal with the plots and intrigues of Boer spies and sympathizers at the seaport towns, and to close to them this source of supply of munitions of war.[81]

Kitchener was convinced that the absence of martial law governing traffic along the coast of Cape Colony had aided the Boers in the form of

provisions, foreign recruits, and communications with sympathetic foreign governments. The new regulations now brought into force by the general officer commanding in Cape Colony, together with civilian colonial authorities, were designed to bring these sources of assistance to a swift end.[82] But more reinforcements were promised for the following March in the shape of six fresh battalions in exchange for two tired ones to be released from service in South Africa and four cavalry regiments in place of two tired ones. Six hundred fresh Canadians plus the heavy recruitment of yeomanry units at home represented further assistance, and Brodrick promised to give serious thought to Kitchener's request for a thousand mounted yeomanry per month.[83]

But if Kitchener's numbers were on the rise and his mobility correspondingly improving, the extremely challenging nature of the ground and climate exacted a fearful toll on the vast numbers of horses required for the cavalry, mounted infantry, artillery, and commissariat. Between February and November 1901, the disease known as "glanders" alone accounted for the deaths of 7,500 horses, with another 5,000 suffering from other illnesses over the same period. In late November, Kitchener explained the array of problems he faced on the veterinary front:

> The loss in horses, both in columns in the field and in the veterinary hospitals, has always been very serious especially during the winter months when grazing is not procurable. . . . The mounted troops we employ are some of them very bad in the care of horses. Colonials are terrible, Yeomanry and Mounted Infantry are bad, and column commanders and officers have the greatest trouble in getting moderate care taken of the animals. I tried fitting out columns with extra horses as the boers [*sic*] have but the loss through want of care was so terrible I had to give up the plan. Where boer poneys [*sic*] thrive, our horses simply die. A number of our men are now mounted on rough boer poneys. But what will carry a boer who has two or three spare poneys well, fails in most cases to carry the colonial or cavalry soldier. The work our mounted troops have to do in finding the boers is also so much greater than that of the boers who remain in hiding, that we lost a much larger portion though the boers have lost very considerably.[84]

Circumstances were improving by the end of the year, however. In early December, Kitchener could inform the War Office of "a considerable extension of the boundaries of the enclosed areas, and [of] a proportionate diminution of the enemy's field of operations." In Cape Colony, columns under General French had expelled the Boer commandos from much of the midland districts, and those that still roamed about in the northeastern and southwestern districts were considered "more of a serious inconvenience than a menace or danger of any circumstance. They are in inhospitable country and are being given no rest."[85]

In the Orange River Colony, British troops had strengthened their hold over the area east of the main railway line, and Kitchener estimated that

the Boers' area of operations there would soon be completely bisected by a line of blockhouses extending via Kroonstadt to Lindley and from Bethlehem to Harrismith. In addition, engineers were busily engaged in extending the existing blockhouse line between Heilbron and Frankfort to Tafel Kop, which the Boers had for a substantial time used as a rendezvous point and signaling area. Other lines were in the process of extension, as well. "Besides the advantages that may accrue from thus cutting up a vast stretch of country," Kitchener explained to his superiors in London:

> these lines tend to increase our own power of mobility, and under their protection the extension of the railway from Harrismith to Bethlehem is about to be commenced. The earthworks and culverts of this line were finished before the outbreak of the war, and the opening of it for traffic, while greatly facilitating the passage of troops, materials, and supplies in the heart of the north-east district of the Orange River Colony, will go far towards establishing our hold on that portion of the country which has hitherto been the general resort of De Wet's bands.[86]

Engineers had by early December also completed the eastward extension of an existing line of South African Constabulary posts, the whole benefitting from the cover of several mobile columns in the eastern Transvaal under Major General Bruce Hamilton, who was actively engaged in pursuing Boers under Louis Botha, now obliged to operate in more confined areas than ever before. "Thus," Kitchener concluded, "the system of protection of the railway lines by blockhouses has been extended to the protection of areas in conjunction with the establishment of lines which divide up the country outside these areas. The value of this undertaking is already evident, and its completion promises to produce lasting and beneficial results."[87] Hamilton's tireless efforts soon reaped rewards. On the night of December 3, knowing that a force of Boers had managed to outflank his right and proceed to the southwest, Hamilton executed a long night march in pursuit about 32 kilometers (20 miles) southwest of Ermelo, surprising a scattered laager at dawn on the 4th and capturing 93 prisoners, 116 horses, 26 wagons, 29 carts, and stocks of ammunition, telegraph, and signaling equipment.[88]

In northern Transvaal, two columns under Colonels Dawkins and Colenbrander linked up on November 27 at Hartbeesfontein, where they made plans to attack a commando under Badenhorst, which intelligence identified as present at Sterkfontein. The attack began at dusk on that day, when 200 of Kitchener's Fighting Scouts emerged from Zand River's Poort, while the rest of the mounted troops proceeded via Reitvlei and Langkloof. Over the course of the following two days, the Boers, withdrawing rapidly back, succeeded in eluding their pursuers. But the British refused to ease up the pressure, and on the 29th, Colenbrander

with 100 men pressed ahead of the rest of the column and followed the tracks left behind by Badenhorst's burghers. Remaining closely on their tails through an area almost bereft of water and his troops quite exhausted, Colenbrander finally made contact with his quarry on the morning of December 3, capturing 15 prisoners and all the wagons of the commando. Badenhorst himself, with the 60 men remaining to his command, eluded capture by scattering into the dense bush lining the Poer Zyn Loop River. This effort, in conjunction with Hamilton's operations, both described by Kitchener as "well planned and carefully executed," netted in all 104 prisoners, 50 horses, 50 mules, 500 cattle, 6 wagons, 6,000 rounds of small arm ammunitions, "and the serious discomfiture of the enemy in a district in which he had long considered himself immune."[89]

In the northeastern part of the Orange River Colony, the British spent early November carefully arranging for the convergence of several columns on the area between the towns of Vrede and Reitz, where intelligence had indicated a Boer concentration. Plans were accordingly drawn up to effect a gradual contraction of this wide "infested" area in such a fashion as to surround the commandos. In the event, the results proved that even the most carefully planned and coordinated movements could and sometimes did fail. "The operation was a comprehensive one," Kitchener explained to the War Office:

> and some idea of its extent and the difficulty attending its execution may be gained when it is noted that the rendezvous and starting points of the outermost column engaged upon it were roughly at the angles of a parallelogram, whose diagonal is 175 miles in length, and of which no side is less than 100 miles, marked by the points: Standerton, Harrismith, Winburg, and Heilbron.
>
> Although the difficulties of distance and of marches designedly tortuous were most successfully overcome by the column commanders, and although the time of arrival at their allotted positions on the circumference of the inner circle was as perfect in this far-reaching manoeuvre as could have been in the most restricted of peace operations, I was disappointed in the event. The results were less than the excellence of the work performed by officers and men deserved, and this was in a great measure due to accident.[90]

No sooner had the converging movement of the various columns begun, when about half the Boer force "moving in their usual indefinite and undetectable fashion, succeeded in drifting through the gaps, at this time and at this point necessarily wide, of our encircling line," and proceeded to northwest, aided in their escape by the cover afforded by mist and rain, though abandoning wagons and supplies as they fled. But the principle of converging columns was sound, nevertheless. Kitchener explained how this sort of operation functioned:

The need for both punctuality and deception of movement was especially enjoined upon all column commanders, and thus a difficult combination was effected without a hitch. No column marched straight upon its objective; some at times were actually moving away from it, and marches of all were circuitous and misleading to a degree, yet none were late, and all reached their allotted points fresh and ready for the work they hoped would ensue. A more or less free hand as to the route he should pursue had been given to each commander, the necessity for inter-communication on the third day and for the punctual arrival of the columns at their final positions being alone insisted upon. The last march was performed at night, and when dawn of the 12th November brought the columns to their objective, the fears that the bulk of enemy they had hoped to enclose had escaped were realised.[91]

While Kitchener admitted that the actual loss inflicted upon the Boers in these operations was insubstantial, he rightly identified the considerable degree of damage wrought on the commandos' freedom of movement and means of supply, not least of food. The tally of this particular operation is telling on this point, with 22 Boers killed and 98 taken prisoners (of whom 12 were wounded), 10,200 cattle and 3,000 horses captured—though not more 5 percent were regarded as useful—plus nearly 200 wagons and a considerable number of other vehicles of various descriptions. Such large-scale operations must also be seen in the context of many more minor efforts, such as those conducted through the "energy and ingenuity" of officers such as Colonel Rimington and Major Damant, operating from Frankfort along the valley of the Vaal River, where their frequent taking of prisoners also played a part in gradually diminishing their adversaries' resistance—achieved, as Kitchener readily recognized, by their "marked ability in adapting themselves to the peculiar methods of Boer warfare."[92] But, as always, many columns achieved comparatively little in exchange for sometimes prodigious expenditures of time and effort; General Elliott, commanding another column, conducted several night raids between November 26 and 28, but he failed to make contact with any commando of significant size, arriving at Kroonstad on December 1 with 15 prisoners, 114 wagons, 89 carts, 2,470 cattle, and 1,280 horses, though most of the latter ineligible as remounts for Kitchener's forces.[93]

Still, by denying these commodities to the Boers, Kitchener's campaign of continual pursuit and harassment was slowly bearing fruit, for, notwithstanding the often poor condition of captured horses, cattle seized from the Boers not only denied these to Kitchener's enemy but conversely benefitted the army commissariat. By the closing months of 1901, the health of British troops was now reasonably good, though wastage through sickness remained a problem. Still, Kitchener reported:

it is far less than might be expected from the arduous labour entailed by the constant pursuit of a very mobile and scattered enemy, frequently at night, and in season of heavy rains. Despite the fatigues of incessant marching, the harassing anxieties of night outpost work in exposed and isolated positions, and the discomfort of wet bivouacs, the cheerfulness and energy of our men is always evident, and there is a quiet determination on the part of all ranks to relax no effort until the campaign has been brought to a successful issue.[94]

His newly arrived troops were fast acclimatizing and "hardening," while veterans of the new form of fighting constituted "a fine body of soldiers, well-skilled in the difficult warfare in which they are engaged, and capable of any efforts which they may be called upon the make."[95] The blockhouse system was also having a palpable effect on Boer mobility, albeit at the considerable cost to man them, which Kitchener continued to reduce to free up infantry for the mounted role. He personally inspected about 16 kilometers (10 miles) of the line between Standerton and Ermelo, concluding that no escort was needed and the country around completely clear of a hostile presence. Some intrepid Boers still managed to penetrate the lines, but only to find themselves in enclosed areas with nothing to achieve, Kitchener concluded, apart from "wander[ing] aimlessly about. I expect they will starve or surrender. . . . Like wild animals they have to be got into enclosures before they can be captured. The boers [*sic*] cordially dislike the blockhouse lines."[96] De Wet and other Boer commanders occasionally attacked vulnerable portions of these lines under the cover of darkness—and occasionally inflicted serious casualties when doing so, but Kitchener rightly identified such forays as the actions of desperate men,[97] and by January 1902, he could justifiable take satisfaction at the lines' effectiveness:

I feel we are now getting a much closer grip on the boers [*sic*] in the Eastern Transvaal and the O[range] R[iver] C[olony]. The blockhouses are doing well though of course the boers can and do occasionally force their way through them at night with loss. Even then they are a great help by pointing out where the boers are. We do not claim that these lines are impervious barriers. In fact I rather like the boers to get through sometimes as they thus get separated and out of touch with each other. The proof of their utility is the cordial manner in which they are detested by the boers.[98]

Further drives continued into 1902. With 30,000 men at his disposal, along with armored trains, Kitchener made three attempts in February and March to corner de Wet against the blockhouse lines that crisscrossed the northeastern area of the Orange Free State. While this strategy trapped relatively few Boers, in general Kitchener's drives of this period

proved successful, with Boer morale suffering under the continuous pressure exerted by the relentless pursuit, and British troops systematically destroying stocks of food as they advanced across a broad front.

At about the same time, in the western Transvaal, Lord Methuen was continuing his hunt for de la Rey, who found his freedom of movement seriously restricted by the ubiquitous blockhouse lines. Other problems now dogged the remaining Boer units, many of which were operating with fewer than 200 men. Food, clothing, and ammunition were growing increasingly scarce, winter was approaching, the numbers of joiners actually assisting the British in seeking out their own compatriots was on the rise, and losses through death and capture could not easily be replaced.

Other Boer commanders faced no better prospects. De Wet, in the Orange Free State, Botha in the eastern Transvaal, and de La Rey in the western Transvaal confronted the problem of far more numerically superior British forces and the narrowing limits imposed by blockhouse lines, which together with Kitchener's scorched earth policy confined roving bands of increasingly desperate commandos into the wasteland left in the wake of British troops' devastation. British patrols, now available in large numbers, kept the commandos constantly on the move, rendering it difficult for them to obtain food, weapons, ammunition, and horses, thus forcing the insurgents to look to their own survival instead of maintaining the initiative that they had seized long before. Those determined to fight on, the *bitter-enders*, continued to do so, but to no tangible end, for they could mount nothing more substantial that occasional forays and minor raids against the British. Even de la Rey's finest achievement—at Tweebosch, fought on March 7 beside the Little Hart River where his burghers struck Methuen's rearguard, inflicting almost 200 casualties and taking 850 prisoners, including the wounded Methuen himself, at a cost of only 34 men—the victor had no option but to release them owing to his inability to feed much less to confine them.

When delegates from the various commandos still in the field in the eastern Transvaal met to consider negotiating a peace, Deneys Reitz observed their appalling appearance: "Nothing could have proved more clearly how nearly the Boer cause was spent than those starving, ragged men, clad in skins or sacking, their bodies covered with sores, from lack of salt and food. Their spirit was undaunted, but they had reached the limits of physical endurance."[99] By this point, little remained of the original fighters from the war's outset back in October 1899. Almost 7,000 had been killed in action, thousands remained in prison camps in Bermuda, Ceylon, India, and St. Helena, and many more thousands, the *hensoppers*, had surrendered, with some even aiding and abetting the British as joiners in the capacity of guides and scouts. The National Scouts operated in the Transvaal, while those in the Free State were known as the Orange

River Colony Volunteers. By April 1902, about 4,000 Boers were collaborating with their erstwhile enemies.

By early 1902, British military strength stood at a staggering 250,000 men, backed by 8,000 blockhouses and 3,700 miles of barbed-wire barricades, with Kitchener deploying 9,000 men in a continuous cordon 87 kilometers (54 miles) in length, which in February advanced in hopes of trapping de Wet and Steyn. A further 8,000 troops garrisoned blockhouse lines while eight armored railway carriages moved up and down the line. De Wet managed to elude even this gargantuan effort, but this sweep still captured 300 commandos—numbers otherwise insignificant in major modern conflicts, but under the circumstances those which the Boers, now *in extremis*, could no longer afford to lose. Another drive, launched in March against de Wet, caught 800 Boers (minus de Wet), but with increasing use of joiners and black Africans as scouts, intelligence gatherers, and armed guards, the noose was fast tightening.

Kitchener also came to realize that he could increase pressure on his opponents by a change of tactics respecting Boer women and children living on the veldt. Mobile British columns continued to raze farmsteads to the ground; but hereafter, civilians were simply left in situ instead of transported under guard to concentration camps—thus, leaving something on the order of 13,000 homeless and destitute women and children to fend for themselves, subject to the mercy of the elements, and possible attacks from blacks. These trying circumstances—together with still further military setbacks such as on April 11 at Roodewal, where a Boer attack led by General Kemp was repulsed by a combined British force, which killed nearly 50 of de la Rey's men and wounded 120—played a part in persuading Boer leaders to consider negotiations.

COUNTERINSURGENCY PREVAILS: THE BOERS CAPITULATE

More than a year before the war actually ended, peace talks had opened at Middelburg between Louis Botha and Lord Kitchener on February 28, 1901. These talks had come about as a result of the latter's suggestion during a time of stalemate, with neither side, in the event, prepared to give much ground. The negotiations were cordial, but there were a number of difficult questions to settle. Initially, both sides brought forward grievances concerning the conduct of their respective opponent. Botha raised the issue of the British arming of natives, while Kitchener, who offered fairly lenient terms, expressed anger over the wearing of British uniforms by some Boer soldiers. Peace naturally dominated the discussions. Boer demands included the prompt return of prisoners; ultimate self-government for the former Boer republics; the use of Afrikaans and

English in schools and courts; Boer debts to be cleared up to £1 million; reconstruction money to be offered; blacks not to be permitted the vote before the colonies were granted self-governing status; and a general amnesty to be extended to all former Boer combatants, including Cape rebels—though the latter were to be disenfranchised. The Salisbury government rejected these terms, in particular those relating to amnesty for Cape rebels, and to blacks' rights, which Chamberlain insisted should be the same in the new colonies as those held in the Cape Colony. Botha was not prepared to compromise on the crucial point of the republics' independence. The Middelburg talks had therefore failed, though the issues discussed there would ultimately serve as the basis for the successful talks at Vereeniging the following year.

These talks began on April 11, 1902, the same day as the last engagement of the war, at Roodewal. Kitchener had informed the Boers that the Dutch had offered to mediate, and though the British government refused to accept this offer, Kitchener made known the possibility of direct talks to settle a conflict that was now rapidly petering out. A Boer delegation consisting of Botha, Smuts, de Wet, and Steyn arrived at Pretoria, where they stunned Kitchener by proposing terms strikingly similar to those Kruger had rejected at Bloemfontein three years before. It seemed clear the Boers appreciated that the war was in fact unwinnable. They still insisted, however, on the independence of the republics, ignoring the fact that they had been all but vanquished and occupied. In London, the government swiftly called for unconditional surrender, though one concession, essentially symbolic in nature, was offered: Milner was instructed to take part. This order indicated the tacit recognition that the republics were still sovereign states. As a political rather than a military representative at the talks, his participation suggested that this was more than simply a surrender arranged between opposing commanders, but a political settlement between two nations, despite the fact that, technically, neither the Orange Free State nor the Transvaal any longer existed as independent entities.

The Boer delegates requested an armistice in order that they could consult with their representatives abroad as well as with their commanders still in the field. They, in turn, could gauge the views of their own men. Kitchener refused to allow communication with Boers abroad, but in an unprecedented move offered the Boer delegates unhindered use of British railways and telegraphic services to enable consultation with commandos scattered throughout South Africa. He also arranged for safe passage to Vereeniging, south of Johannesburg, where he offered to host formal peace talks in May; for the period of four days prior to the conference, he gave a pledge that British forces would not attack any commando that was to be consulted. Kitchener was anxious to finish the war. He had already been offered the post of commander in chief in India, an appointment he wished to take up as soon as possible, and he was genuinely

concerned about the physical and human costs of the ongoing war. He was prepared to make concessions for peace, though not extensive ones, and had shown no compunction about ordering the execution of 51 Cape rebels.

Prior to the talks, de Wet had consulted with all the commandos. The units voted on the thorny issue of retaining or yielding independence. The overwhelming majority voted for independence. British representatives informed Burger, the acting president of the Transvaal, that they would not grant this. De Wet, who felt morally compelled to honor the views of his compatriots in the field, announced, therefore, his readiness to carry on the fight. Jan Smuts and Barry Hertzog now intervened, bringing their legal knowledge to bear on the issue. They averted deadlock, successfully arguing that delegates were not in fact compelled to follow the views of the commandos, but must regard them merely as points for their guidance. They were free, as representatives of the burghers at large, to proceed in the best interests of their people.

Five negotiators were formally appointed from among the 60 Boer delegates assembled at Vereeniging who had been elected by the various commandos. These were Louis Botha, Koos de la Rey, and Jan Smuts on behalf of the Transvaal and Barry Hertzog and Christiaan de Wet for the Orange Free State. In general, those from the Transvaal backed peace, while those from the Orange Free State largely supported continued resistance. President Steyn of the Free State, a staunch bitter-ender, was effectively impotent at the peace talks because of ill health. Had he been able to participate fully, he would have been a strong advocate for the continuation of hostilities.

When negotiations began, the Boers offered the Rand, other territories, and control of foreign affairs to Britain in return for self-government in all other matters to be permitted without restriction. Britain was in a strong position and refused. Kitchener had been instructed to follow the Middelburg terms closely, conceding little more than an amnesty for the Cape rebels: independence for the Boer republics was simply not an option. Milner was prepared to cease all discussions, but Kitchener was more conciliatory, and in separate informal discussions with Smuts informed him that he predicted a change of government in London within two years. A Liberal government, he suggested, might be prepared to modify the less palatable aspects of any treaty to be signed at Vereeniging. The impasse gradually eased, and the British team drew up a statement calling on the Boers to disarm and accept British sovereignty. If this were signed, other terms would be appended and a formal treaty concluded.

Eventually, and paradoxically, Smuts and Hertzog hammered out with Milner and his team a draft agreement that bore a striking resemblance to the Middelburg terms. Milner and Kitchener declined to set a deadline for the establishment of South African self-government, but the Boers

successfully negotiated concessions over and above the original basis for settlement. Britain, for instance, pledged to pay Boer war debts up to £3 million—triple the amount originally offered. Loans to assist in the rebuilding of houses and farms were to be offered to Boers and loyalists. All adult males were to be eligible to vote, apart from the leaders of the Cape rebels, who would now face a five-year rather than a life exclusion from enfranchisement. Only the leaders of the Cape rebels would now face imprisonment. On the issue of blacks' political rights, the Boers insisted that they were not to be enfranchised until after the colonies became self-governing.

Milner opposed the peace process all along, for he believed that within a matter of months Britain's military position would permit her to establish her own terms, with himself at the head of the civilian administration of a greater South Africa. Yet his efforts to stall for time failed, and the terms in general were considered very favorable by the Cabinet in London. Nonetheless, ministers expressed doubts on the issues of loans and on native rights. London had no objection to the amount proposed, but the figure offered was to include the repayment of war debts as well.

The issue of native rights proved of far greater concern. It was perfectly clear that if suffrage were not extended to blacks before British control ceased in South Africa, the Boers, once authority passed into their hands, would simply refuse it. The British government found this unacceptable. Nevertheless, insistence on this point threatened the whole peace process. After Milner informed the cabinet that the Boers refused to sign any agreement containing such concessions, the British government yielded, leaving the political fate of natives in the hands of a future Afrikaner government. The sacrifice of this issue was to have major implications for the future of race relations in South Africa.

The revised draft treaty arrived back in Pretoria on May 27 and required a simple acceptance or refusal on the part of the Boer leaders by May 31. Botha led the peace faction within the Boer delegation and justified his position on numerous grounds. Severe shortages of horses and food continued to impede the ability of commandos to operate successfully. Those women and children still on the veldt or accompanying the commandos were still suffering extreme hardships. The camps, which had never provided adequate shelter, were now full. Conditions inside were well known to the outside world. Circumstances that led families to wander without shelter and adequate food could, he argued, no longer be tolerated. The blockhouses were gradually immobilizing the remaining commandos, no rebellion was likely to occur in the Cape, and foreign assistance had not materialized.

Yet an even greater concern troubled Botha: the threat, real or imagined, of native attacks on Boer individuals and settlements, many of which, their men still on commando, stood effectively defenseless. An incident

at Holkrantz, north of Vryheid, which occurred 10 days before the opening of negotiations, underlined this perceived threat. There a commando had raided a Zulu kraal, drove off women and children, stole the cattle, and left the settlement in flames. After the local chief, Sikhobobo, protested, the commando leader justified the raid on the grounds that the Zulus had aided the British. When, in a public statement, he likened the chief and his men to lice, Sikhobobo launched an attack, retaking a large proportion of the cattle originally seized by the Boers and inflicting heavy casualties on the commando concerned. Although no Boer women or children were harmed in the incident, which was the result of direct provocation, some delegates concluded that only peace could provide Boer civilians real protection. Botha nevertheless had his critics, particularly delegates from the Free State like de Wet and Steyn who continued to refuse peace without the guarantee of independence. The Free State delegates' position was understandable: they had not had to bear as large a brunt of the war as had their southern neighbors in the Transvaal. Indeed, Steyn was so incensed by the terms that he immediately resigned his presidency. De Wet was left the remaining die-hard against surrender—a true bitter-ender.

The ultimate question now fell to the three senior commanders whose importance in the conflict gave them an implicit authority over the opinions of the other delegates. These were Botha, who advocated peace; de Wet, who favored continuing the war until the republics were granted independence; and de la Rey, who at first remained undecided. Finally, the latter concluded that peace, at a time when there were still concessions to be wrung from the settlement, offered the Boers the chance to retain essential elements of their Afrikaner society, such as the education, taxation, and legal systems. Further resistance, de la Rey maintained, offered more burghers the opportunity to change sides, joining the 5,000 men, including de Wet's brother, Piet, who had already offered their services to the British. Peace concluded now, on reasonably favorable terms, offered the opportunity for future independence as a unified Afrikaner nation.

Events took a decisive turn on the morning of May 31, the day scheduled for the crucial vote. Botha and de la Rey met privately with de Wet in his tent and pleaded for his support. Winning the war was impossible, they argued, and little time remained for an honorable peace. De Wet was ultimately persuaded, and the Boer delegates were presented with a document containing six reasons why the British terms ought to be accepted. The policy of scorched earth had rendered further resistance impossible; the concentration camps had already caused untold suffering to Boer civilians; native Africans had openly begun to oppose the Boers, as seen at Holkrantz; the British had issued proclamations threatening the confiscation of Boer land; the Boers possessed no facilities for holding British prisoners; and, finally, there was no realistic chance of victory in the field. When the vote was taken that afternoon, 54 delegates out of 60 supported the treaty

terms. The Boer leaders quickly returned to Pretoria and signed the treaty. "We are good friends again now," Kitchener said to the Boers as he shook hands with them. The leaders now had to inform the various units in the field. There were still 21,000 men under arms, though one-fifth of all the Boers engaged in the fighting were now on the British side. Disarmament occurred peacefully, though many were not reconciled to peace.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR

The human cost of the war was high, though it is important to remember that the counterinsurgency phase covered only a proportion of the conflict—roughly the summer of 1900 to the summer of 1902. Over the whole period of the war, however, there were approximately 100,000 British and Imperial casualties, including 22,000 dead. About 6,000 were killed in action, while the remaining 16,000 perished as a result of wounds or disease. In a war many had expected to be "over by Christmas" but which actually lasted nearly three years, Britain and her empire eventually sent 450,000 men to fight. The Boers lost at least 7,000 of approximately 88,000 who served in the field (which included 2,100 foreign volunteers and 13,000 rebels from the Cape and Natal), in addition to about 28,000 civilian deaths—mostly women and children who succumbed to disease in the concentration camps. The war cost Britain over £200 million. Of the half a million horses brought to the theatre, 335,000 fell, not to mention scores of mules and donkeys.

At the end of the war, the true, appalling scale of the tragedy could be tabulated: almost 28,000 Boers had died in the 46 concentration camps, mostly from malnutrition and disease—representing almost 10 percent of the prewar populations of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Women accounted for two-thirds of the adult deaths. Most scandalously, nearly 80 percent of the fatalities were those under 16 years old, most commonly dying from measles, pneumonia, dysentery, and typhoid. Official figures record 14,000 deaths among the 115,000 black Africans interned, but the true figure is now thought to be closer to 20,000. What is clear, however, is that, though the camps did not represent a deliberate policy of genocide, they may rightly be condemned as the product of gross indifference by British government officials remote from the scene, together with culpable negligence on the part of many of the camp administrators actually present.

The war left in its wake a ruined economy and a devastated landscape. The wholesale and widespread destruction of Boer farms, livestock, and crops was a new and horrifying feature of the first major conflict of the twentieth century. It is impossible to calculate the extent of the damage exactly, but approximately 30,000 homesteads were burned and several million

cattle, horses, and sheep were either destroyed or carried off. As many as 63,000 Boer families made claims for compensation. Farm-burning had achieved its objective of denying sustenance to the guerrillas, but it left no means of support for families returning from internment. Nor were claims restricted to whites; blacks, who for the most part owed cheaper property and earned far less than their white counterparts, sought a total of £661,000 in compensation for damage inflicted on their homes and livelihoods.

Official contemporary estimates of black African losses, about 7,000, fall far short of the reality. Modern calculations estimate that 115,000 blacks were held in the camps, 20,000 of whom died. To these must be added those unrecorded cases of blacks suspected of working for the British, either as soldiers, as scouts, as spies, or in other capacities, and summarily shot by the Boers. Between 10,000 and 30,000 black Africans were armed by the British Army. Whatever the true figures, they render the traditional view of the conflict as a "white man's war" wholly insupportable. Blacks played a significant role in the British war effort.[100]

Milner had hoped that British rule in South Africa would shift the balance of power between Afrikaners and those of British descent. Defeat of the Boer republics ought, he believed, to have dampened the flow of Afrikaner nationalism. He looked for a heavy influx of British immigrants after the war who would gradually transform the existing culture, language, and legal structure. With the mines already back in operation and with the reconstruction of the infrastructure underway, industry would once again flourish. Yet the government in London constrained Milner's plans, and predictions of mass immigration proved wildly overoptimistic.

The settlement at Vereeniging confirmed British supremacy in South Africa. Reconstruction was now the urgent task of Lord Alfred Milner, in his expanded role as high commissioner for South Africa and governor of the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal. His was a massive undertaking, but assistance was at hand in the form of what became known as "Milner's kindergarten," a group of young, mostly Oxford-educated men such as Lionel Curtis, Patrick Duncan, and Richard Feetham. Milner remained in South Africa until 1905, during which time he improved standards of education and expanded communications and railways. He introduced reforms on the pass laws for blacks and improved working conditions in the mines, but most of his reforms catered to whites.

Although the emotional scars of the conflict would prove harder to heal, practical measures to restore normality were swiftly set in motion. Boer prisoners were repatriated quickly from Bermuda, Ceylon, and St. Helena. Displaced Boer families—in concentration camps, settled in the Cape, or wandering the veldt—had to be resettled in areas that had been devastated by the systematic policy of farm-burning, as had blacks, bitter-enders, joiners, and uitlanders. To deal with the delicate issue of joiners, colonial authorities established separate repatriation councils.

Even the process of returning internees to their farmsteads took time. They could not simply leave on foot. Many remained in the camps for months after the peace until transport was available for them. Many, of course, never made it out, and Boer men arriving at the camps in search of their families sometimes found that they had lost everything.

Economic recovery proceeded apace with the influx of British loans. Vereeniging provided £3 million, together with nearly the same amount in interest-free loans for Boer resettlement and to provide food, medicine, and shelter for immediate need in areas hardest hit by the war. In addition, £2 million was available to uitlanders, blacks, and neutral foreigners. Priority was given to the rebuilding of farms. Tools and seeds were provided to landowners. Total repatriation and resettlement costs ran to approximately £16.5 million. Reconstruction also served to regenerate the economy as a whole, particularly the mining industry, and Milner had begun this work before the war was over, together with his kindergarten. Significant progress was made in returning to and exceeding prewar levels of gold production, so that, whereas in 1903 production stood at £12.6 million, it increased to £27.5 million in 1907, an increase that went far in preparing the region for union only a few years later. This was partly achieved by Milner's controversial policy of importing indentured Chinese laborers, a move strongly criticized by the new Liberal government in London when it was discovered that they were being flogged and by Afrikaners, who banded together in opposition to these newcomers, backed, ironically, by uitlanders who saw their own wages threatened by the willingness of the Chinese to work down the mines at very low wages. It was also achieved by strict adherence to the pass laws and tough control imposed on the cost of native labor.

For ordinary Boers, the hardship caused by the destruction of their homes and farms was greatly exacerbated by a series of droughts in 1902 and again in 1903. The numbers of whites in the Orange Free State living in poverty had been quite low before the war, in spite of an increase in the Transvaal. After the war, however, there were sharp rises in white poverty in both former republics, with landowners so destitute that they had not even the means of accommodating the landless. Joiners and hands-uppers were particularly hard hit.

Some of the landless and collaborators were rehoused in newly established settlements in the eastern and western Transvaal, but many formerly rural whites, left with nothing, made for the cities in large numbers, desperate to find work in industry and mining. Society consequently underwent some dramatic and not always desirable changes. Traditional rural life began to disappear with the growth of the urban base and the new prosperity brought by the influx of capital, mostly from Britain. A new generation of Afrikaners now found they had money in their pockets and began to harbor political ambitions.

Black South Africans suffered the greatest hardship as a result of the war. Resettlement of those blacks formerly accommodated in camps did take place, but proper recovery was hindered by the lack of farm tools and seed, largely because of the disproportionate assistance provided to whites. The Native Refugee Department in the Transvaal, for instance, received just over £16,000 compared to the nearly £1.2 million provided to the Repatriation Department for white resettlement and the rebuilding of farms. In several parts of the Transvaal, where the devastation had been particularly acute, thousands of blacks continued to suffer after the end of hostilities. With successive droughts worsening an already dreadful situation, many blacks had no choice but to become wage earners working for white farmers where, before, they were landowners in their own right. For blacks who had formerly been employed in the mines, there were no improvements in working conditions. Indeed, wages fell, controls over workers increased, and conditions declined.

Blacks also lost on the political front, for British victory did not bring the hoped-for political reforms necessary for the extension to the new colonies of the franchise already in force in the Cape. Not only were there no black representatives at the talks, their rights were not even represented. Vereeniging only postponed the resolution of the question of political rights for blacks, "coloureds," and Indians until the new colonies achieved self-governing status. Milner's administration did nothing to reverse this, and the treaty did not require the Boers to effect change. Laws in the Transvaal and Free State that discriminated against blacks not only remained in force but, in some cases, extended into new areas of life. All of this was tacitly sanctioned by the Treaty of Vereeniging, which effectively retained the status quo of white supremacy in South Africa. There was no reason to suppose self-governing Afrikaner states would freely extend the franchise to the black majority.

For white South Africans, the war had a number of effects on society and politics. Milner's policy of Anglicizing the region in terms of both language and culture, and of discouraging Afrikaner nationalism, had failed utterly. Since the massive British immigration he had hoped for had not materialized, he had no desire for the new colonies to form any self-governing federation to include Cape Colony and Natal. Some Boers became permanent outcasts as a result of collaboration, but by embracing a policy of reconciliation Louis Botha made considerable strides in reshaping Afrikaner society, strengthened by general perceptions of the inadequacy of British compensation held by everyone from bitter-enders to joiners and resentment of Milner's policy of Anglicization. General calls for forgiveness reached sympathetic ears for the most part. This process was helped by the fact that the Boers could focus outward on the British as the cause of their travails.

A war fought on South African soil, involving the citizens of the two republics, necessarily had a profound impact on Afrikaner identity.

The Boer people had fought for the ideal of independence, they had produced great leaders, they had defied one of the greatest powers on earth, and they had suffered greatly in what some held to be a divine cause. This new sense of pride led to a cultural revival that established and promoted Afrikaans as a fundamental part of the region's identity. Political revival went hand in hand with cultural revival. In the aftermath of war, several political parties sprang to life, such as the Het Volk party under Botha, Burger, Koos de la Rey, and Smuts, established in 1905 in the Transvaal. In the former Free State, men such as Barry Hertzog, Abraham Fischer, and Christiaan de Wet founded the Orangia Unie in 1906. Milner's hopes of an end to Afrikaner nationalism were dashed within a few years of war's end.

In Britain, the Liberal Party won the election of 1905, and Henry Campbell-Bannerman became prime minister. The implications for South Africa were significant in two ways: first, Milner was recalled, though his subordinates remained behind in the administration. Second, Campbell-Bannerman's government granted self-rule to the Transvaal in December 1906, followed by the same concession to the Orange River Colony the following June. Louis Botha was elected prime minister of the Transvaal in the general elections of 1907, while in the Orange River Colony Abraham Fischer became prime minister. The Progressive Party, headed by James, won the Cape elections of 1904, but three years later, by which time all four British South African colonies shared similar political systems, interest within both British loyalist and Afrikaner circles turned toward unification. Afrikaner political ascendancy was achieved when in the following year the South African Party, led by John Merriman, won the general election in the Cape, leaving Natal as the only British colony in South Africa that was not under Afrikaner leadership. It was now only a matter of time before nationalists held sway over imperialists.

Thus, the creation of the Union of South Africa on May 31, 1910, as a self-governing dominion of the British Empire exposed the greatest paradox of the war: that Britain had emerged the victor nine years before only in the strict military sense. The Boers had clearly won the peace, for though the new nation comprised all four former British Crown colonies, Afrikaners, with Louis Botha the first prime minister, dominated its political and cultural life. The Boer republics had gone to war in the name of liberty and now they had achieved it—and more—with Natal and the Cape Colony being subsumed in the process.

NOTES

1. Kitchener to Brodrick, July 5, 1901, National Army Museum (hereafter, "NAM"), 1971-01-23-33-37.

2. For readings on this conflict, see John Laband, *The Transvaal Rebellion: The First Boer War, 1880–1881* (London: Routledge, 2005).

3. For the origins of the Boer War, see particularly Iain R. Smith, *The Origins of the South African War, 1899–1902* (London: Longman, 1996).

4. See, for example, Brian Robson, *The Road to Kabul: The Second Afghan War, 1878–1881* (Stroud, UK: Spellmount, 1980).

5. Quoted in Martin Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold and War: The Making of South Africa* (London: Pocket Books, 2007), p. 450.

6. Kitchener to Brodrick, December 20, 1900, PRO 30/57/20/Y9.

7. Quoted in Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold and War*, p. 450.

8. Quoted in Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold and War*, p. 450.

9. Quoted in Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold and War*, p. 451.

10. Kitchener to Roberts, February 8, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-14.

11. Quoted in Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold and War*, p. 459.

12. Kitchener to Roberts, December 4, 1900, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-4.

13. Circular Memorandum No. 29, December 21, 1900.

14. For this conflict, see John Lawrence Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba, 1895–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

15. See Brian Roberts, *Those Bloody Women: Three Heroines of the Boer War* (London: John Murray, 1991); Emily Hobhouse, *The Brunt of the War and Where It Fell* (Cleveleys, Lancashire, UK: Wilding Press, 2011); Birgit Susanne Seibold, *Emily Hobhouse and the Reports on the Concentration Camps during the Boer War, 1899–1902: Two Different Perspectives* (Stuttgart, Germany: Ibidem, 2011); Rykie Van Reenen, ed., *Emily Hobhouse: Boer War Letters* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1920).

16. Hobhouse, *Brunt of the War*, p. 67.

17. Hobhouse, *Brunt of the War*, p. 71.

18. Hobhouse, *Brunt of the War*, p. 112.

19. Hansard, Vol. XCV, House of Commons Speech, June 14, 1901.

20. Hansard, Vol. XVC, House of Commons Speech.

21. Kitchener to Brodrick, March 7, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y30; March 22, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y33.

22. Kitchener to Brodrick, May 9, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y52(b); June 28, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y66.

23. Kitchener to Roberts, June 14, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-32.

24. Kitchener to Roberts, June 14, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-32; Kitchener to Lord Milner, July 4, 1901, Bodleian Library, Milner Papers, Microfilm 175, ff. 75–76; Kitchener to Brodrick, June 28, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y66.

25. Kitchener to Brodrick, June 21, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y62; Kitchener to Roberts, June 14, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-32.

26. Kitchener to Brodrick, June 28, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y66.

27. Kitchener to Brodrick, June 21, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y62.

28. Kitchener to Brodrick, July 26, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y77.

29. Quoted in Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold and War*, p. 453.

30. Kitchener, Army HQ, Pretoria, to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

31. Kitchener to Brodrick, February 1, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y/19; February 16, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y23; March 7, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y30; Kitchener to Roberts, February 8, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-14.

32. Brodrick to Kitchener, February 23, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y27; May 25, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y57.

33. Kitchener to Roberts, February 28, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-17; Kitchener to Brodrick, March 15, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y31. Kitchener to Brodrick, March 22, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y33.

34. Kitchener to Brodrick, March 22, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y33.

35. Kitchener to Brodrick, April 26, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y48.

36. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO (War Office) 32/8034.

37. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

38. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

39. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

40. Kitchener, Army HQ, Pretoria, to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

41. Kitchener, Army HQ, Pretoria, to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

42. A small (1-pounder) 37-millimeter horse-drawn quick-firing cannon.

43. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

44. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

45. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

46. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

47. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, May 8, 1901, WO 32/8034.

48. Kitchener to Brodrick, May 9, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y52(b).

49. Kitchener to Roberts, May 24, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-29.

50. Kitchener to Brodrick, May 9, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y52(b); Kitchener to Roberts, June 14, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-32.

51. Kitchener to Brodrick, June 21, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y62.

52. Kitchener to Roberts, May 9, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-27.

53. Kitchener to Roberts, May 24, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-29.

54. Brodrick to Kitchener, May 18, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y55.

55. Brodrick to Kitchener, May 25, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y57; Kitchener to Brodrick, June 7, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y60.

56. Kitchener to Brodrick, June 21, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y62.

57. Kitchener to Brodrick, June 7, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y60.

58. Kitchener to Roberts, June 14, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-32.

59. Kitchener to Roberts, June 14, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-32.

60. Kitchener to Lord Milner, July 4, 1901, Bodleian Library, Milner Papers, Microfilm 175, ff. 75–76.

61. Kitchener to Brodrick, July 5, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-37.

62. Kitchener to Brodrick, July 5, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-37.

63. Kitchener to Brodrick, July 26, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y77.

64. Kitchener to Roberts, August 9, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-41.

65. Kitchener to King Edward VII, August 16, 1901, Royal Archives, Windsor, W60/130.

66. Kitchener to Roberts, August 23, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-43.

67. Kitchener to Roberts, August 23, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-43; Kitchener to Brodrick, August 30, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y82(a).

68. Kitchener to Brodrick, September 13, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y85.
69. Kitchener to Brodrick, September 20, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y88.
70. Kitchener to Brodrick, September 27, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y90.
71. Kitchener to Brodrick, October 11, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y94; October 18, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y95.
72. Kitchener had defeated the Dervishes in the Sudan campaign of 1896–98, which culminated in the decisive Battle of Omdurman. Though fanatical in the extreme and exceptionally tenacious, his adversaries did not enjoy the benefits of either mobility or firepower—horses or rifles—like the Boers.
73. Kitchener to Roberts, November 1, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-55.
74. Kitchener to Roberts, November 8, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-57.
75. Kitchener, Army HQ, Pretoria, to the Secretary of State for War, November 8, 1901, WO 32/8065.
76. Kitchener, Army HQ, Pretoria, to the Secretary of State for War, November 8, 1901, WO 32/8065.
77. Kitchener, Army HQ, Pretoria, to the Secretary of State for War, November 8, 1901, WO 32/8065.
78. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, November 8, 1901, WO 32/8065.
79. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, November 8, 1901, WO 32/8065.
80. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, November 8, 1901, WO 32/8065.
81. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, November 8, 1901, WO 32/8065.
82. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, November 8, 1901, WO 32/8065.
83. Brodrick to Kitchener, November 16, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y104.
84. Kitchener to Brodrick, November 29, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y108.
85. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066.
86. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066
87. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066
88. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066.
89. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066.
90. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066.
91. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066.
92. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066.
93. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066.
94. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066.
95. Kitchener to the Secretary of State for War, December 8, 1901, WO 32/8066.
96. Kitchener to Roberts, December 13, 1901, NAM, 1971-01-23-33-63; Kitchener to Brodrick, December 13, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y111.
97. Kitchener to Brodrick, December 27, 1901, PRO 30/57/22/Y11(b).
98. Kitchener to Brodrick, January 3, 1902, PRO 30/57/22/Y117(b).
99. Quoted in Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold and War*, p. 459.
100. Christiaan De Wet wrote to Kitchener in March 1901, strongly objecting to the latter's use of black troops as "against all civilized law of civilized nations, which you term yourselves." De Wet to Kitchener, March 18, 1901, WO 32/7958.

CHAPTER 3

Glimpsing the Future: The Irish Struggle for Independence, 1916–21

Simon Robbins

Historically, the British Army has been an imperial force whose main role since the eighteenth century has been the defense of the empire. Conventional wars in Europe were aberrations. Although very active in and proficient at colonial warfare, the British Army did not have a well-defined, written counterinsurgency doctrine and indeed had an aversion to constructing one until late in the twentieth century, preferring a more pragmatic and flexible, evolutionary approach. This was partly because easy victories were frequently achieved against poorly armed indigenous armies rather than guerrillas, making it appear that a counterinsurgency doctrine was not needed. It was also partly the result of the army's culture and of the great variety of indigenous foes, which made the formulation of a coherent doctrine difficult. There was, however, still plenty of material for officers to consult, notably W. C. G. Heneker's *Bush Warfare*, T. Miller Maguire's *Strategy and Tactics in Mountain Ranges*, and Francis Younghusband's *Indian Frontier Warfare*. In particular, the publication of *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* by Major (later Major General Sir) Charles Callwell in 1896 filled the gap left by the failure to develop a written, formal doctrine, although the 1906 edition is better known. By synthesizing the lessons of past experience in colonial warfare, Callwell filled the vacuum by supplying the standard manual not just for the British Army but also for other armies because he assimilated the experiences of other armies and chose his examples from many periods and many armies. Thus, Callwell provided not only a comprehensive

synthesis for the British and many other nations but also the basis for future discussion and development.[1]

In *Small Wars*, Callwell, called the "Clausewitz of colonial warfare" by one historian,[2] clearly distinguished between colonial, small wars "against savages and semi-civilized races" and regular campaigns between organized, conventional armies. The operational experience gained in "imperial policing" of the colonies was a rich legacy, which was kept largely separate from the theory and practice of the home armies prior to World War II. In the colonial wars of the late nineteenth century, the army fought in numerous campaigns against irregulars along the frontiers of the empire. Callwell recognized the importance of vigorous leadership, good intelligence, and public opinion. In *Small Wars*, Callwell openly supported "scorched-earth" tactics, although they might "shock the humanitarian." He specifically advocated the practice of seizing livestock and destroying crops and villages, as a means of weakening an insurgency. Callwell also explicitly justified reprisals and punitive actions against civilians, including collective punishments. He does not seem to have fully realized the negative impact of these techniques on the population and their counterproductive implications. British counterinsurgency campaigns continued to use such methods before 1945, notably in South Africa, Ireland, and Palestine, and then in the campaigns thereafter. These British counterinsurgency methods could be brutal when dealing with civilians, employing not "minimum force" but that required to defeat the insurgency by destroying its civilian infrastructure. Nonetheless, that said, the British Army generally behaved with greater moderation than other colonial powers and totalitarian states. Exceptions such as the Amritsar massacre in 1919 and the Irish War of Independence, 1919–22, reinforced the need for restraint and for deploying "minimum force."[3]

The Easter Rising of April 1916, like those of 1798, 1848, and 1867, was an all-out attempt to achieve a "once-and-for-all" success, which committed its forces, some 1,200 members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), to a static battle. In this futile and reckless bid for independence, which was mainly limited to central Dublin, the rebels received little support and failed to make any serious effort to occupy any of the key sites of either strategic or symbolic significance, such as Dublin Castle or Trinity College. The insurrection lacked any substantial external support, as attempts by Germany to foment trouble in Ireland were unsuccessful. Most notable were the failed attempts by Sir Roger Casement, who was later captured in Kerry, to recruit an Irish Brigade from prisoners of war at Limburg in Germany, which received a largely hostile reception, and to supply German arms, which foundered when the ship carrying them was intercepted by the British. Nevertheless, the British administration had been surprised and unprepared for the revolt, lulled into a sense of security by the failure of the Kaiser to provide support for the enterprise.

Like the earlier revolts, the Easter Rising was ruthlessly suppressed by the British Army, which then embarked on a series of arrests, executions, internments, and raids. Thus, although the scale of the rising was relatively minor, with some 500 dead and 2,500 injured, when compared to the contemporary slaughter on the Western Front, the political impact was massive. Ireland was governed under martial law between April and November 1916, and during this period emergency regulations were employed to curtail civil liberties, such as fairs, football matches, and markets, and to suppress protest, while even greater coercion was introduced in "disturbed" districts. Furthermore, some 2,000 were interned (the last of the internees were released in December 1916), and 16 rebels were executed. In the mythology of Irish republicanism, this "martyrdom" had an immense impact, alienating many of the Irish people who had hitherto supported nonviolent agitation for change in parliament. The execution of the rebel leaders provided martyrs for the republican cause and allowed a Republican recovery, which prepared the Irish people through extensive propaganda for a prolonged war of independence. Inspired by the guerrilla tactics of the Boers in the South African War, in this struggle the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was the forerunner of modern revolutionary groups, conducting a politically inspired campaign. The rebels employed terrorism in conjunction with guerrilla warfare in both rural and urban areas, rather than more conventional tactics, rendering Ireland ungovernable.[4]

Thus, the situation in Ireland worsened following the Easter Rising of 1916. This was largely the result of the British failure to find a political settlement and an adequate answer to Irish political aspirations. The British not only failed to repress the opposition but also contrived to alienate potential supporters, notably with its poor management of the aftermath of the rising. By 1918, political support in Ireland for independence was gaining momentum. Nationalist support drifted toward *Sinn Féin* (Ourselves Alone), which rallied the nationalists away from the Irish Parliamentary Party, who had neither delivered Home Rule, which had been deferred by the outbreak of World War I, nor prevented conscription. The Irish government remained unreformed, failing to find a political settlement or to understand the effects of the rising and the growing radicalization of Irish opinion. During 1917, the use of ineffective and poorly conceived coercion, such as the arrest and imprisonment of Volunteers, merely added martyrs to the republican cause, notably Thomas Ashe who died in Mountjoy Gaol in September 1917 after going on hunger strike, while weakening the morale of its own security forces. The application of conscription to Ireland in April 1918, although not enforced, brought moderates and the Catholic hierarchy behind the republicans. The arrest of the majority of the leadership of *Sinn Féin* by the new Lord Lieutenant, Field Marshal Viscount French, in May 1918, left the

extremists with growing influence. It was followed up by the closing down of the whole *Sinn Féin* organization in July 1918, which merely drove the republicans underground. However, conscription was not enforced and little was done to prevent the spread of *Sinn Féin* activity. Having won the December 1918 general election in southern Ireland, winning 73 of the 105 Irish seats, *Sinn Féin* Members of Parliament refused to take their places at Westminster and instead proclaimed an Irish Republic and set up its own government, *Dáil Éireann*.[5] As one officer noted that:

> The rebel campaign in Ireland was a national movement backed by a large proportion of the population and was not conducted by a few hired assassins as was so often supposed.[6]

At the time, however, the British government attributed *Sinn Féin*'s gains in local elections and its victory in the South during the general election to intimidation, failing to understand that the very legitimacy of British rule was being challenged. When following sporadic outbreaks of violence during 1918, an insurgency was launched by nine Tipperary Volunteers with the murder of two catholic constables near Soloheadbeg on January 21, 1919, political support in Ireland was behind the rebels who were thus able to mobilize the population behind their cause. In contrast, the British Army was being demobilized and was already hamstrung and stretched by huge global obligations, notably intervention in the Russian civil war and the Chanak crisis, while Ireland was still primarily a training area providing drafts for overseas units. The garrison in Britain fell from over 2,000,000 in November 1919 to 25,000 in March 1920. There were never sufficient men, and the units were too thinly distributed and poorly trained to be able to establish close control over the countryside and dominate rural areas. In 1920, Irish Command had only 29 weak battalions, and even when this had risen to 51 battalions in January 1921, it was still understrength. The eight southwestern counties where martial law was applied from December 1920 contained less than half the troops that were deployed in Northern Ireland during the 1970s.[7] As a result, the areas allocated to divisions, brigades, and battalions "were usually much too large to control effectively,"[8] and as 5th Division noted, "there were never, during 1920 & 1921, sufficient troops for the continually increasing duties."[9]

There were complaints by the army about the lack of transport and in particular of armored vehicles and of armored or rifle-proof trucks, which could operate under the constant threat of ambush. Many trucks were obsolete and unserviceable because of shortages of spare parts. They also made "an appalling noise" and were "particularly vulnerable to attack by ambush." But in fact the army's real handicap was not a shortage of equipment but poor training. These resulted in poor tactics and a lack of

basic skills such as marksmanship and field craft, which were very important in defeating the IRA, who presented only a few targets. The troops lacked the expertise as skirmishers and snipers to track down and outfight the rebels in the few engagements, which offered fleeting opportunities. Of the three divisions conducting the operations in Ireland, only the 5th Division appears to have carried out any special antiguerrilla training, running a series of three-day courses for officers and NCOs at the Curragh during the winter of 1920–21. Indeed, one of the most promising developments during operations in 1921 was the abandonment of the use of noisy motor vehicles, which were too dependent on usable roads, in favor of greater movement across country by the troops on foot. This tactic was in support of the idea of "playing the enemy at his own game" and securing surprise and secrecy, which hitherto had been the preserve of the IRA. Nevertheless, area searches and "drives" were still conducted on a large scale during 1921 without much success. For example, in January 1921, one of the first large-scale area searches was undertaken in Dublin (Operation *Optimist*) when 600 troops sealed off and searched the city center for two days. No important arrests were made, and rebels caught in the area had been able to escape the cordon. This was the result of the hostility of the population, the IRA's intelligence that was not caught out by such cumbrous operations, and the poor training of the troops who did not make the cordon effective enough.[10]

The commander of the 6th Division at a conference in April 1921 indicated that "no 'driving' should take place, except with a very definite object, based on sound information." He observed that "it serves no purpose to be active merely for the sake of being active: men should be worked only with a good object in view." Instead, "small and mobile columns should be formed," which were "ready to move at short notice" when intelligence had produced "definite information of a suitable objective."[11] Drives on a big scale generally "had very little success" because " it was found to be almost impossible to keep secret the preparations necessary for concentrating a large force." Smaller, mobile columns, however, "were able to make use of the insecurity element of surprise and also considerably lowered the enemy's moral[e] by creating in him a feeling of insecurity." In addition, it was presumed that:

> A great deal of local patrolling was carried out by each Detachment, so as to keep the enemy on the move, and prevent him resting, in any quiet area. The general idea was that there should be no quiet areas, and that the enemy columns should be constantly harassed.[12]

The IRA, the military wing of the political party *Sinn Féin*, made Ireland ungovernable between 1919 and 1921, with a classic guerrilla campaign that employed some 3,000 poorly equipped "volunteers," despite the

presence of 80,000 British troops at the zenith of the campaign. Unable to defeat the British Army in the field, the IRA resorted to guerrilla warfare with hit-and-run tactics conducted by local units against the security forces, which were widely dispersed in small detachments, and their lines of communication. They hoped to provoke the police and military into conducting reprisals. In the summer of 1920, they also developed the "flying column," a small mobile band of insurgents based on the Boer commandos employed during the guerrilla phase of the South African War. Many of the Irish leaders, notably Michael Collins, who was sometimes known as the "Irish De Wet," and Dan Breen and Tom Barry, who commanded flying columns, were influenced by Boer tactics. These flying columns were able to raise the tempo of the rebel campaign, being on active operations for several days harassing and attacking the security forces, before returning to civilian life to rest. Overly reliant on traveling by road in lorries, the army was often ambushed, notably at Bruree in Limerick in July 1920, Rineen in Clare in September 1920, and Kilmichael in Cork in November 1920. Most dramatic of all was the attempt to ambush and kill Lord French himself at Ashtown, near the Viceregal Lodge, on December 19, 1920. These tactics allowed the guerrillas to remain in the field supported by an infrastructure amidst the population, inflict greater casualties on the British, and maintain a presence in the countryside; however, such methods also presented larger targets for the British security forces. In early 1921, these columns were mostly broken up into smaller units that were less vulnerable to British attacks. The IRA also used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against military convoys from mid-1920. It also issued weekly notes, *An t-Óglach* (*The Soldier*, the official in-house journal of the Volunteers), which outlined the lessons from their operations.[13]

There was also a campaign of arson, sabotage, shootings, and terrorism carried out in the United Kingdom during 1920–21, which was countered by arrests, imprisonment, deportation, and internment. While the guerrilla campaign was proceeding, a shadow government built up its own administration and judicial system, winning the support of the population while subverting the effectiveness of British rule. Irish republicans provided the template for modern revolutionary warfare, developed later by Mao, Tito, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro, which employed a mass party, popular front, guerrilla warfare, underground government, and continuous propaganda campaign.[14] Fifth Division admitted that:

> Sinn Fein, by sheer terrorism, had got such a grip on the country by the winter of 1920 that the most severe measures of November and December could not show any immediate effect. Action on the part of the troops was followed by intensified acts of terrorism on the part of the rebel leaders—we were always too late.[15]

The British response was piecemeal, uncoordinated, and largely conventional. They also resorted to collective punishment, which had been employed previously in colonial wars. Instead of "winning the hearts and minds" of the population by offering incentives to support the government, the security forces attempted to make the cost of prolonging the insurgency prohibitive for its supporters. Some 4,500 suspects were interned without trial and "security zones" were formed, allowing large-scale cordon-and-search operations to be conducted. Raids and searches on private homes were also conducted to arrest suspects, to seize arms and documents, which provided intelligence on the republican organization, and to harass the rebels. The difficulty was that collective punishment, which included curfews, collective fines, and the destruction of homes, crops, and livestock, exacerbated the hostility of the population, penalizing the whole community in an indiscriminate fashion. In Ireland, the British policy of burning the houses of suspected IRA supporters was disastrous, driving many into the republican camp. It also resulted in retaliation in which the homes of loyalists were burnt, which added another element to the campaign of intimidation and murder by the IRA against loyalists, such as members of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), auxiliary policemen, ex-servicemen, magistrates, and civilians who collaborated with the British. By 1926, the Protestant population in what became the Irish Free State had fallen by a third in an "ethnic cleansing," which had occurred mainly during 1920–22.[16]

Aware of the importance of publicizing the Irish cause, *Sinn Féin* appealed not only to international opinion, especially in the United States, but also to liberal opinion in Britain, causing a domestic backlash. British credibility was undermined by atrocities as they tried to force the Irish into loyalty through brutal suppression. The pattern was set by troops who wrecked the shops owned by members of a jury, which had refused to bring a verdict of murder at the inquest on a dead soldier from the Shropshire Light Infantry, who had been killed by the IRA in Fermoy in September 1919. Similarly, troops went on the rampage in Brandon in July 1920, Cobh in August 1920, and Mallow in September 1920 in retaliation for the deaths of soldiers. Control over the troops was reestablished by the high command, but much damage to the British cause had already been inflicted.[17] A statement made by Colonel G. Smyth, the divisional commissioner for Cork, to the RIC in Listowel in June 1920 typified the lack of discipline that also existed within the police, fuelling the insurgency by alienating an already hostile population:

> The more you shoot, the better I will like you, and I assure you that no policeman will get into trouble for shooting any man.[18]

Consequently, until much damage had been done, the British still failed to pay sufficient attention to "winning hearts and minds" or to countering

IRA propaganda and the adverse publicity that was generated by it by highlighting the violence of the IRA and the atrocities committed during its terror campaign. An effective information service, the propaganda department led by Basil Clarke (a former *Daily Mail* war correspondent), was not created until very late in the campaign, in August 1920, and it was not until 1921 that its structure had been clearly established. Thus, as later in Palestine, Cyprus, and Aden, the British lost the propaganda war. Thus, the shooting of eight-year-old Annie O'Neill and the murder of Mayor Tomás MacCurtáin of Cork City in March 1920 made headlines not just in Ireland and Britain but also in the foreign press, notably in the United States. This was a result of the daily news bulletins issued by the Republican publicity department.[19] To the army, the lesson was clear, namely that:

> Strict control of the press is essential from the beginning. Rebel newspapers must be suppressed, and all others supervised. The assistance derived by the rebel cause from the ease and impunity with which certain journals circulated false accusations against troops and police, and misrepresented motives, was incalculable.[20]

A successful counterinsurgency campaign is built on good civil-military cooperation and, above all, an effective police force working closely with the army, providing local knowledge about the population and intelligence about the activities and infrastructure of the guerrillas. In Ireland, there was a failure to create a central command or to develop organizations, such as joint committees at different levels of the two forces, to ensure unity of command and good coordination of the counter-insurgency strategy. From 1916 onward, following the Easter Rising, there were communal pressures on the RIC, whose posts were often under attack and whose constables faced intimidation, and sectarian violence between the Catholic and Protestant communities. The abandonment of garrisons in rural areas during the winter of 1919–20 had far-reaching consequences, reducing the effectiveness of the RIC as a civil police force, which could control the countryside. This lowered the morale of the RIC while raising that of the rebels. This situation was made worse by the recruitment and influx of English recruits, who lacked training and local expertise, into the RIC and its Auxiliary Division. Friction between the army and the Auxiliaries, which exacerbated the lack of cooperation between the police and military, was revealed during the burning of Cork City in December 1920 by some Auxiliaries in retaliation for the murder of a comrade. The reprisals carried out by the Auxiliaries made the army, whose "full and searching" inquiry was critical of the conduct and behavior of the police, reluctant to work with them. These tensions remained unresolved and the failure to work together hampered intelligence

collection, one of the key ingredients of any successful counterinsurgency campaign. It was also hindered by bureaucratic rivalries between Special Branch and MI5 in Whitehall, which weakened the gathering of intelligence during 1919–21. Throughout the campaign, there was a failure to develop a single, integrated intelligence system. The divisions remained unresolved and continued to hamper the creation of an efficiently organized counterinsurgency strategy, which was the key to success.[21] As the 5th Division later commented:

> We were much handicapped in 1920 by the unavoidable weakness of the military intelligence service. . . . Until a more efficient service could be brought into existence we had to rely, almost entirely, on the information in the hands of the police. The rebels realised this as well as we did, hence their attacks on the R.I.C.[22]

Exacerbating the situation was the fact that the British vented on the population their frustration at the failure of their operations to defeat an elusive enemy, driving the public into the rebel camp. The RIC was a paramilitary force—very different from the English police—whose main task was to locate and prevent political discontent and subversion. By 1916–19, it was in a state of disarray owing to constraints of political expediency and financial stringency, was in a lack of cohesion and leadership within its command structure, and became isolated from the Irish population. The government had failed to reform the RIC after the Easter Rising of 1916 and did not bring in outside experts, such as C. A. (later Sir Charles) Tegart, a police officer from India, until too late. By contrast, the IRA enjoyed the decisive advantage throughout the campaign of being able not only to obtain intelligence but also to deny it to the security forces. Through a combination of fear, loyalty, and respect, the rebels were also able to depend on the cooperation of the population, which was in turn also denied to the British.[23] As one officer who served as intelligence officer with a battalion observed:

> The [work of the] I.R.A. Intelligence Service was, of course, easy owing to the majority of the population being friendly, but nevertheless it reached a very high standard of efficiency, and every movement, and very often every intended movement, of the Crown Forces was known.[24]

The 5th Division believed that:

> Perhaps the greatest handicap was the lack of knowledge of who was friend and who was foe; all civilians had to be regarded as potential enemies. What would have helped would have been the compulsory introduction of identity cards for every male and female above a certain age; this was only possible under strict Martial Law.[25]

Demobilized soldiers, the notorious Black and Tans, and Auxiliaries who wore khaki shirts and black-green trousers because of a shortage of RIC uniforms were recruited by Major General Sir Hugh Tudor, the head of the RIC from May 1920, to solve the shortage of policemen. Former army officers were also recruited by Tudor to staff the Special Auxiliary Division of the RIC. The Auxiliary Companies, known as "Tudor's Toughs," of the Auxiliary Division, which was commanded by Brigadier General F. P. Crozier, a veteran of the Ulster Volunteers and the 36th (Ulster) Division, possessed great potential for counterinsurgency operations. But their lack of either military or civil control, which resulted in brutal and savage treatment of the civilian population, meant that the opportunity was lost through inadequate discipline and training. Lacking police training and discipline, these Auxiliaries, when ambushed by guerrillas who then disappeared into the crowd, began to treat the Irish population as the enemy, committing reprisals and terrorizing inhabitants during raids and searches. Of particular notoriety was the Croke Park incident (November 1920) and burning down of part of Cork (December 1920). There were also allegations of assassinations of prominent republicans and summary executions and abuse during interrogations of suspected rebels. The British failure in Ireland was largely the result of a lack of restraint in a war that was fought in the full glare of world attention.[26] One officer commented on one of the main lessons to be learned from Ireland:

> In some places the attitude taken up was that the whole population was hostile, and should be treated accordingly. This was often the attitude adopted by the Auxiliaries. Personally, I was convinced that such an attitude was fundamentally wrong, and that in conditions of this nature, you must at all costs distinguish the sheep from the wolves. If you fail to do so, you drive the whole population into the hands of the enemy.[27]

The army relied on the police, notably the CID (Criminal Investigation Department) and Special Branch of the RIC, for intelligence, and the weakness of the intelligence services was a major factor in the failure of operations as it made it very difficult to target and arrest republican leaders. Well informed by an effective intelligence organization, the IRA unleashed a terror campaign from July 1919, which sought to break the key link between the police and the community by attacking police stations and killing informers, policemen, magistrates, and officials, causing the government's intelligence from spies, informers, and police surveillance to dry up.

The police (including Special Branch), the postal, telegraph and telephone services, the civilian clerks employed by the army, and the civil service had been badly infiltrated by spies. The IRA also targeted intelligence

personnel, informers, and anyone else who provided information. The most celebrated example of this was when "hit squads" of Michael Collins (director of intelligence for the IRA) killed a large number of the undercover branch of the Dublin Metropolitan Police on the morning of November 21, 1920—Bloody Sunday. The intelligence system that was beginning to reassert itself collapsed and had to be rebuilt during 1920 and 1921 without the invaluable knowledge that could have been available if the security forces had appreciated the importance of intelligence much earlier. The result was that the British were fighting in the dark, without the intelligence to identify the organization and members of the IRA. This in turn restricted their ability to target and eliminate the insurgents' infrastructure.[28]

To remedy the deterioration in police intelligence, the army had to build up its own intelligence system. The intelligence staff at GHQ in Dublin was reinforced and created a registry and card index system to draw up "an Irish Republican army list." Soldiers were deployed in 1920 in both Cork and Dublin to protect police posts, which in turn provided intelligence and local knowledge of their districts. Only Dublin District produced any consistent success in penetrating the rebel infrastructure, as a result of an expansion of Special Branch in mid-1919, which ran its own clandestine intelligence service. The army was slow to appreciate not only the significance of a well-defined system of cooperation with the police but also the importance of specialized intelligence officers, not appointing its own intelligence officers at brigade and divisional levels, who gathered some good information, until November 1920. At battalion level, it was left to commanding officers to decide whether or not to appoint them, and GHQ did not establish specialist intelligence officers in all battalions until December 1920. As in Malaya later, it was realized that good cooperation between the army and the police would only be achieved if they worked together for a long period of time, winning the trust of the local population and becoming knowledgeable about the area. Improvements in intelligence gathering meant that the army's first offensive in early 1920 was able to accumulate much information, seize many documents, and capture many key insurgents. The British gradually built up an "Order of Battle" for the IRA and draw up "black lists" of IRA members from captured documents, the interrogation of prisoners, and informers. In April 1921, local centers were established to gather all intelligence from captured IRA documents. Reconnaissance flights and aerial photography undertaken by the Royal Air Force were also employed to locate and identify IRA units, bases, and supplies. Despite repeated attempts, the British never succeeded in infiltrating the IRA, but improved intelligence did reduce the IRA's capacity to operate during 1921, while British operations in turn became more successful.[29]

At first, facing a sophisticated political and military insurrection, the British had failed to grasp the full challenge presented by the complex and unprecedented nature of the situation in Ireland. As a result, they made every cardinal error that the security forces can make when facing an insurgency. Civil-military cooperation was poor and as a result so was the collection of intelligence, which was the key to success. Above all, by failing to offer a political option other than Home Rule, they did not provide a "carrot" with which to "win the hearts and minds" of Irish moderates, who rejected the violence of the IRA. The army and the police were too reliant on the "stick," employing conventional tactics, which were no match for the more mobile rebels. In particular, army and police units were too road bound, using motorized transport, which seemed to offer both speed and mobility but in practice provided easy targets for ambushes. As a result, the security forces were obliged to operate in larger convoys, which merely offered larger targets for the IRA.[30]

These large convoys and the dispersion of troops to defend police stations, to undertake searches of houses, and to man curfews surrendered the initiative to the guerrillas. Large-scale drives were employed to maintain the "offensive spirit," but in attempting to encircle and destroy, the insurgents were largely futile as the rebels usually managed to escape; nevertheless, the authorities persisted with drives up to the end of the war in July 1921. When based on good intelligence, such moves achieved some success, forcing the rebels to break into small groups and keeping them on the move. By 1921, although never entirely abandoning large-scale operations, the British started to employ small units made up of volunteers and led by junior officers in operations known as "rebel hunting." Carrying rifles, bandoleers of ammunition, and haversacks and marching distances of up to 25 miles at a stretch, these small units lived in the wilds and returned to base only to refit and rest. They acted on good information to retain the element of surprise and employed their superior discipline, equipment, and training to target and ambush specific IRA units and their leaders. These small "hunter-killer" units often adopted a retaliatory policy of "shoot to kill."[31]

The British employed small "flying columns" of their own, which, often were wearing rubber-soled shoes instead of hobnailed boots, employed field craft and stealth to beat the guerrillas at their own game and regain the initiative. Augmented by constant patrols and air support, these tactics kept the insurgents on the move, lowered their morale, and gave them a feeling of insecurity. Intelligence-led ambushes and raids placed the rebels under great pressure and forced them to resort increasingly to terrorism. Many British officers were convinced that they were close to defeating the IRA, thanks to an improvement in British tactics and performance during counterinsurgency operations. Indeed, the Irish high command, notably Michael Collins and Richard Mulahy (chief of staff),

feared that the increased success of the British, who had been massively reinforced by 17 infantry battalions in June and July 1921, would break their insurgency. The discovery of effective tactics came too late, however, although the losses sustained by the IRA and the reinforcement of the security forces during June and July 1921 strengthened Lloyd George's position in the negotiations, which ended the war in July 1921. However, it was very difficult completely to nullify the IRA and, while it survived despite a shortage of arms, forcing the British to resort to heavy-handed tactics, the political pressure on the British mounted. It was the collapse of British political support for continuing the war, when combined with the collapse of the British administration, the poor security situation, and the decline in support for British rule in Ireland, which eventually led to British withdrawal from southern Ireland.[32]

Moreover, by the end of 1920, the army had restored discipline and put a stop to unofficial reprisals as part of an attempt to regain the initiative. But by that time the battle for "to win the hearts and minds" of the Irish population had been lost and the war could not be won without a ruthless campaign of genocide. As it was considered impossible to forcibly remove a white, European population, no effort was made to resettle the population to separate and protect it from the rebels. This failure of the British to provide security for the lives and property of the loyalists was a decisive factor in allowing the IRA to control the rural countryside through intimidation. The potential of involving "loyalists" was ignored, and no policy was developed to recruit them into a Home Guard to defend towns or rural communities from intimidation and free up more security forces to deal with rebel forces. Nevertheless, the use of special military areas as a punitive measure restricted and controlled the movement of the civil population. The introduction of martial law in the eight southwestern counties in December 1920, which allowed the death penalty for carrying arms, an extension of curfews, and the internment of IRA suspects, led to a period of sustained coercion lasting until the truce began on July 11, 1921. Prior to this, lacking sufficient manpower or government support for overwhelming military coercion, the British Army had been forced to apply moderate but counterproductive coercion, which had created a spiral of disorder and violence without overpowering republican resistance. By the end of June 1921, 4,500 had been rounded up and interned in camps at Ballykinlar, Bere Island, the Curragh, and Spike Island. Together with large-scale drives by the security forces in rural areas and systematic cordon and search operations in urban areas, this ensured that the IRA were continually harried and placed under some pressure. The requirement for householders to display a list of occupants meant that rebels who were on the run were deprived shelter in houses while their hiding places were identified by aerial reconnaissance.[33]

The IRA, however, recovered, and a stalemate then emerged in which despite some successes, neither side was able to gain the upper hand and to obtain a decisive victory. The IRA conducted a "war on informers," which also targeted Protestants, ex-soldiers, women who befriended soldiers, and other minorities, such as social misfits or tramps, for assassination, expulsion, being burnt out or tarred, and feathered. Similarly, the British mounted a dirty war in a parallel campaign to terrorize the republican movement and its supporters. Both sides employed political murders and "death squads." The IRA, which was increasingly vulnerable, and the British, who were facing growing international condemnation, eventually signed a truce in July 1921 and negotiated the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which was signed in December 1921.[34]

The Anglo-Irish War was the first true modern revolutionary insurgency, and the IRA was able to win a "people's war" some 30 years before Mao's victory in China in 1949, creating a model for Mao, Tito, and Ho Chi Minh. Inspired by the Boers during the guerrilla phase of the South African War, the Irish themselves would provide a model for other nationalists. Both Ba Maw and Subhas Chandra Bose, nationalists in Burma and India, respectively, during the 1930s and 1940s, studied *Sinn Féin* literature, which was translated into Burmese. The Jewish leadership in Palestine in the 1940s and George Grivas in Cyprus during the 1950s were also influenced by the IRA. Yitzhak Shamir, a member of the Stern Gang and a future Israeli prime minister, adopted the *nom de guerre* "Michael" in honor of *Sinn Féin*'s Michael Collins. The only Jewish member of the Irish Volunteers played an active part in organizing *Irgun Zvei Leumi* (National Military Organization) on the IRA model in the 1930s. The Russian-born Vladimir Jabotinsky, the founder of *Irgun*, and his successor, Menachem Begin, both followed the Irish model in shaping their insurgent strategy. In return, the books of Menachem Begin (*Irgun*) and George Grivas (EOKA) were studied by the IRA during the 1950s. Britain was unprepared to deal with the complex military and political problems posed by the new style of guerrilla warfare but learnt from its mistakes and had developed an effective counterinsurgency strategy by the spring of 1921. However, the ceasefire of July 1921 meant that it was never fully tested, and it is doubtful if by this stage victory could have thwarted Irish independence. The British did not have to conduct another major counterinsurgency campaign until the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in 1936.[35] Fortunately for the British, the Arab insurrection lacked the political and military organization of the IRA in Ireland and of the later Jewish insurgency.[36]

However, this obscured the significance of the Irish rebellion, which would provide a template for later revolts against British rule and as such would be very influential. Soldiers did not yet recognize the crucial importance of political factors in overcoming an insurgency, failing to

put enough emphasis on the "winning hearts and minds." Books written during the interwar period, such as *Imperial Policing* by Major General Sir Charles Gwynn (1934) and *British Rule, and Rebellion*, a Staff College text, by Colonel H. J. Simson (1937), built on the work of Callwell but took the argument no further. They summed up admirably the traditional strengths of "imperial policing," notably the use of "minimum force," maintaining the rule of law, and civilian primacy and control of the military, which formed the core of British counterinsurgency from 1945. Thus, Gwynne emphasized the importance of cooperation with the civilian authorities, notably the police, but demonstrated little understanding of the increasingly political nature and importance of guerrilla warfare, failing to stress the need for redressing the population's grievances. Similarly, although aware of the political nature of an insurgency, which necessitated a political as well as a military response, Simson based most of his theories on the Arab Revolt in Palestine, emphasizing the benefits of martial law and ignoring its negative aspects and limitations as displayed in Ireland. Major B. C. Dening, in his article "Modern Problems of Guerrilla Warfare," which was published in the *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* in 1927, predicted the increasingly political nature and importance of guerrilla warfare, but this was very much the exception. Both Gwynne and Simson largely ignored the lessons and wider political issues of the insurgency in Ireland, leaving the British unprepared doctrinally to respond to insurgencies after 1945 and when waging counterinsurgency campaigns during the retreat from empire fell back on the "small wars" traditions of numerous colonial wars.[37]

Nevertheless, as a result of revolts in Ireland (1919–21), the Malabar Coast of India (1921–23), Lower Burma (1930–32), and Palestine (1936–39) and continuous operations in the Middle East and along the North-West Frontier of India, the British entered the "counterinsurgency era" with more practical experience than any other nation. Britain adopted the use of "minimum force" as a key principle following the Hunter Commission's report on the Amritsar massacre in 1919, accepting that the use of brutality and excess force created greater problems in the long term and could backfire politically. During the Moplah Revolt in India (1920–21) and the Burma Rebellion (1932–36), the British employed a "clear-and-hold" strategy, which was crucial for a successful counterinsurgency campaign, and in Burma they used "civic action" in combination with resettlement, a model for future campaigns, notably Malaya. After 1945, they would consolidate this into a counterinsurgency doctrine, building on the cooperation of colonial administrators, the police, and the army that had been developed between the wars and would culminate in the elaborate committee system used during the Malayan Emergency. The administrative and police skills gained on the North-West Frontier and elsewhere during the interwar period would be invaluable in fighting

insurgents during the postwar period.[38] Such "colonial" methods continued to work well in Malaya, Kenya, Borneo, and Oman where the insurgency continued to be mainly rural but rather less well in Palestine, Cyprus, and Aden where the insurgency was largely urban and political factors were much more to the fore as an important element in the battle to win hearts and minds.

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CHAPTER 4

Colonial Rebellion and Counterinsurgency in Palestine: British Pacification of the Jewish and Arab Revolts, 1936–48[1]

Matthew Hughes

INTRODUCTION

The occupation of Palestine during World War I by British-led forces and the subsequent formation of a British-run Mandate government in the country triggered waves of resistance from the local Palestinian population opposed to the new colonial regime and the official policy of support for Jewish immigration to Palestine. Palestinians rioted and attacked Jews in 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1933; Britain countered these civil disturbances with force, deploying police and soldiers and shooting rioters. The Palestinians launched a full-scale rebellion (or insurgency) in April 1936 that consumed the country for three years with pitched battles, ambushes, sniping, strikes, and assassinations. The British responded with an imperial policing operation in aid of the civil authority—or, as we would say today, a counterinsurgency campaign—sending to Palestine an immense force of 25,000 soldiers, defeating the Arab rebels by 1939, after which a new enemy emerged in the form of Jewish insurgents fighting for the establishment of a Jewish state. After 1945, units of the British Army—such as the paratroopers of the 6th Airborne Division—were once again sent to Palestine, this time to fight Jewish insurgents. Many of the British soldiers who went were veterans of World War II, deploying for a new style of irregular, urban warfare against Jewish

guerrillas. Where the Palestinians failed, the Jews succeeded in their mission. Terror attacks by Jewish fighters in insurgent groups such as *Haganah* ("the Defense"), *Irgun Zvai Leumi* ("National Military Organization"), and *Lochmei Heruth Israel* (*LEHI*) ("Fighters for the Freedom of Israel," also known as the "Stern Gang") helped make Britain's position untenable, and in late 1947 the British made the decision to quit Palestine. In May 1948, Israel was formed in the midst of a war between the Israelis and the Arabs, just as the last British troops were leaving the country from the port of Haifa. This chapter details the military traditions of the British Army when fighting rebels, the nature of the colonial state that supported counter-rebel operations, and asks the question: why did the Palestinians fail while the Jews succeeded in their insurgency? It examines the tactics used by the British in their counterinsurgencies in Palestine, the role played by intelligence, and the impact of local collaborators on the course of the army's operations, especially the early use of "pseudo" warfare with Palestinian "peace bands" and forces such as British General Orde Wingate's Special Night Squads. Operations in Palestine against the Arabs and the Jews in this period foreground a British "way" in counterinsurgency, establishing a pattern for subsequent wars against rebels in places such as Malaya and Kenya in the 1950s, colonial hot spots where soldiers and police who had served in Palestine went on to fight.

MILITARY TRADITIONS

Britain as an imperial power had long experience of dealing with colonial rebellions. An influential volume published in 1896 by a British Army officer, Colonel C. E. Callwell, titled *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, condensed into writing well-established counterinsurgency methods from places such as the North-West Frontier of India, methods that the army would later employ in Palestine and that pivoted on the notion of collective punishment and reprisals against civilians:

> The adoption of guerrilla methods by the enemy almost necessarily forces the regular troops to resort to punitive measures directed against the possessions of their antagonists. It must be remembered that one way to get the enemy to fight is to make raids on his property—only the most cowardly of savages and irregulars will allow their cattle to be carried off or their houses to be destroyed without making some show of resistance . . . it has generally been found very useful to send raiding parties consisting of mounted men great distances to carry off the enemy flocks and herds or to destroy encampments and villages.[2]

"Uncivilised races attribute leniency to timidity" and must be "thoroughly brought to book and cowed or they will rise again," warned Callwell.[3] Collective punitive measures such as "destroying villages,

carrying off livestock and trampling down crops and so on," already well established in irregular "small" wars against guerrillas by the time that Callwell wrote his book, were used in the Boer War (1899–1902), during the Egyptian and Iraqi revolts (1919–20), and in India and during the Irish war of independence (1919–21).[4] Captain Phillipps, who fought against the Boers in South Africa, illustrates what this meant in practice, noting how he had to go, "at the General's bidding, to burn a farm near the line of march. We got to the place and I gave the inmates, three women and some children, ten minutes to clear their clothes and things out of the house, and my men fetched bundles of straw and we proceeded to burn it down. . . . The women cried and the children stood by holding on to them and looking with large frightened eyes at the burning house. They won't forget that sight, I'll bet a sovereign, not even when they grow up. We rode away and left them, a forlorn little group, standing among their household goods."[5] Major General Sir Charles Gwynn and Colonel H. J. Simson—the latter served in Palestine during the revolt after 1936—codified Callwell's lessons in books published in the 1930s, applying them to imperial hot spots such as Palestine, arguing that such situations require firm military rule. Interested readers are directed to these key texts.[6] General Sir Andrew Skeen, who had served in India, made similar points in his "how-to," "lessons learned" volume of 1932 in which he laid out in stark terms what British forces should do to rebels: "You are going out to set your mark on a stubborn enemy, to punish him for years of accumulated evil-doing in the only way bar killing that has the least effect on him. There is usually an outcry about this form of punishment, with good reason. I dislike it intensely, but after the enemy's will to stand and take punishment is broken, there is no other way to make him watch his step in the future."[7]

LEGAL SYSTEMS

The British military legal system and the colonial "emergency" state supported harsh measures by troops fighting insurgents, including collective punishments that would be impracticable back in the United Kingdom (or in counterinsurgencies fought today by democratic powers), an issue discussed in depth elsewhere.[8] The *King's Regulations* and the *Manual of Military Law* (1929 edition) bound soldiers fighting in Palestine, key points from these volumes appearing in abridged form in pocket-sized paperback pamphlets such as *Notes on Imperial Policing, 1934* and the 1937 *Duties in the Aid of the Civil Power* that officers could take with them on operations (and which Gwynn helped to write).[9] The manual was very precise on how soldiers should conduct themselves, forbidding stealing from and maltreatment of civilians. The 1929 regulations stated

that every soldier was also a citizen and subject to civil as well as military law and that an "act which constitutes an offence if committed by a civilian is none the less an offence if committed by a soldier."[10] But it also provided a legal framework for shooting rioters and allowed for *collective punishments* and *retribution*, both loosely defined terms in the 1929 volume and both of which are relevant to what happened in Palestine in the late 1930s. This policy was not new. Callwell's turn-of-the-century work cited earlier explicitly justified reprisals and punitive actions against civilians, and the practice of British counterinsurgency methods before and after Palestine routinely included such measures, including in Ireland during its war of independence (1919–21).[11] The 1929 manual clearly stated that where the army needed to coerce people and to check terrorism, collective punishment and reprisals that would "inflict suffering upon innocent individuals," were "indispensable as a last resource."[12] According to the law, "The existence of an armed insurrection would justify the use of any degree of force necessary effectually to meet and cope with the insurrection."[13]

Strictly speaking, the 1929 manual applied punitive laws only to civilians living under military occupation during wartime. In the case of Palestine, the military rule imposed by Britain in 1917 was lifted in 1920 with the establishment in the country of a civil government, but collective punishment was explicitly permitted under the Ordinances and Orders-in-Council introduced in Palestine by the Mandate authorities in 1922 and regularly updated thereafter. Indeed, a "Collective Responsibility for Crime Ordinance" dates back to 1921.[14] The British used these local laws when implementing collective punishments on Palestinians and villages, referring to them after April 1936 as "emergency" laws. While civil proceedings against servicemen for individual offences during any military operations were theoretically possible, a strict reading of the military law in force with its broad acceptance of group punishment and reprisal action meant that tough action was within the law. Where theft, brutality, and assault by soldiers occurred, unlawful under the "civil" element of the law governing conduct, military personnel had little to fear from disciplinary action: "Complaints about [the] military were frequent, lawsuits rarer, and successful lawsuits almost unheard of . . . in the colonies the military had a freer hand than in Britain, and restraint of excessive violence was far lighter."[15] Victims could take out civil proceedings, but before 1947 and the Crown Proceedings Act, the Crown was immune from prosecution so these would have to be against individual soldiers and the victim would have to prove that the soldiers involved were acting beyond their lawful operational orders. This was not practicable, especially when soldiers had no identifying personal number or sign. One Arab claimed that soldier "number 65" had beaten him, unaware that all the men from that unit, the York and Lancaster Regiment, formerly the

65th Foot, carried this number on the left side of their helmets.[16] Moreover, the establishment of military courts and regulations in Palestine after September 1936, which could "not be challenged by the ordinary civil courts," made any such appeal almost impossible to succeed.[17] This author has found only one successful prosecution of servicemen in Palestine, of four British police officers who blatantly executed an Arab prisoner in the street in October 1938, witnessed by a number of non-British European residents, not Arabs, whose complaints never led to a prosecution.[18]

Moreover, after September 1936, the army established military courts and regulations in Palestine that were separate from the ordinary civil courts and were not open to the usual legal challenges. The shift from a civil to a military judiciary was partial and gradual, but the general effect was that legal appeals by Arabs, when allowed, would invariably fail.[19] While British forces in Palestine during the revolt officially operated as an aid to the civil power, conditions in the country in practice approached martial law, a situation that further eased civil limits on soldiers' behavior. The British never instituted full (or "real") martial law in Palestine, but in a series of Orders-in-Council and through emergency regulations after 1936 they issued "statutory" martial law, a level between semi-military rule under civil powers and full martial law under military powers and one where the army and not the civil high commissioner had the upper hand.[20] After September 1937, when the rebellion intensified, the army increasingly took charge in Palestine, with the "full power of search and arrest, independent of the police, and the right to shoot and kill any man attempting to escape search or ignoring challenges."[21] Emergency legislation also made possible the mass detention without trial of Palestinians in concentration camps, sometimes for months on end—a familiar tactic from later British counterinsurgencies.

From late 1937 or early 1938, Palestine was under *de facto* if not *de jure* martial law of some sort. Nor was military rule much affected by the international laws in place at the time (e.g., the succession of Geneva conventions from 1864 to 1929 and the Hague conventions of 1899 and 1907) as these dealt mainly with the conduct of war and the treatment of prisoners of war (POWs) rather than with the maltreatment of civilians. Britain had classified the Arab revolt as an internal insurrection and not an international war, thereby denying POW status to captured Arab fighters and allowing them to be treated as civilian criminals subject to ordinary civil law modified by conditions of martial law, such as the death penalty for carrying a weapon or ammunition. To be fair, the British never entirely removed civil authority in Palestine from the decision-making process, but by 1938, the high commissioner tempered rather than directed the actions of British armed forces. When Sir Arthur Wauchope, the high commissioner in place for the first phase of the revolt, looked for a

political solution to the revolt and challenged army efforts to institute martial law, he antagonized the armed forces who thought him too lenient and referred to him as "washout" and "ga-ga."[22] In March 1938, the Colonial Office replaced him with the more compliant Sir Harold MacMichael.

COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENTS AND REPRISALS

While military operations tackled rebels in the field, reprisals, collective punishments, and the draconian colonial emergency state underpinned what the army did in Palestine. Without collective punishment, military operations in isolation would not have worked to defeat the insurgency. Indeed, a central element to military operations was the punishment of the civilians on whom the rebels depended for support. It might not have been fair, but it worked—unjust collective punishment for a collective society unused to justice, and effective against inarticulate, "native," non-white opposition. It would not work against articulate, organized, "modern," white (i.e., European) insurgents with foreign support from countries such as the United States, as the British would discover when fighting the Jews after 1945.

Britain's most spectacular single act of destruction in Palestine during the Arab revolt was the demolition of large parts of the old city of Jaffa—a tangled urban area used by insurgent fighters—just two months after the outbreak of the rebellion. Beginning on June 16, 1936, and continuing in several phases to the end of the month, the British Army, ostensibly to improve the sanitation system, cut wide pathways through the old city with large gelignite charges to allow military access to, and control of, a rebel-held area that had previously eluded military control.[23] In the process, the army blew up between 220 and 240 multi-occupancy buildings, rendering homeless up to 6,000 Palestinians, most of whom were left destitute, having been told by air-dropped leaflets on the morning of June 16 to vacate their homes by 9 p.m. the same day.[24] Some families were left with nothing, not even a change of clothes.[25] As a British Army intelligence officer observed, "That will fucking well teach them."[26] Such vandalism shocked the British chief justice in Palestine, Sir Michael McDonnell, who frankly condemned the action, for which he was dismissed.[27] Under strict censorship and therefore unable to express its outrage at the destruction of the heart of old Jaffa, the Palestinian press resorted to irony. Jaffa's leading newspaper, *Filastin* [*Palestine*], reported how the "operation of making the city [Jaffa] more beautiful is carried out through boxes of dynamite."[28] *al-Difa'* [*The Defence*] headlined the assault with "Goodbye, goodbye, old Jaffa, the army has exploded you."[29] Many Jaffans, now refugees, ended up living in shanty towns,

an ironic finale to an action officially depicted as an attempt to improve health and sanitation.

While the destruction of old Jaffa did not contravene the legal framework and principles governing collective punishment discussed in the previous section, the "pacification" permitted under these rules easily elided brutality and torture and blurred the distinction between official and unofficial punishment. Nor was there a clear division between what constituted "punishment," "reprisal," or simply a "search," a looseness facilitated by the leeway given to officers in the field and by the fact that British regiments responded differently to the stresses of suppressing the revolt. Most often, the widespread use of punitive actions and destructive and brutal reprisals stopped short of actual atrocity, but such actions were central to British military repression after 1936 and constituted the core experience for Palestinians during the revolt.

The level of damage varied considerably depending on time, place, and the regiment involved, but whatever the law sanctioned, destruction and vandalism were a systematic, systemic part of British counterinsurgency operations. The destruction could take the form of blowing up houses—often the most impressive ones in the village—or the vandalizing and smashing of household effects. Alongside the destruction, servicemen often looted properties, though the authorities did not officially sanction this and the army issued orders forbidding such things. There were also reprisals in the form of heavy collective fines, forced labor, and punitive village occupations by government forces for which villagers bore the cost. One Arab rebel, Bahjat Abu Gharbiyah (interviewed by this author before his recent death in Jordan), noted that the British Army was unable to "strike" the fighters so it had to resort to "revenge" and "collective punishment."[30] Using air support, radio communications, intelligence, collaborators, and mobile columns, the British improved their tactics against the rebel bands, but as they never were able to defeat an elusive enemy in open battle in rough terrain, they adopted a two-pronged military approach, targeting enemy fighters and the civilians on whom they relied for support.

The June 1936 operation in Jaffa was atypical; troops by and large avoided large-scale destruction in the bigger towns, although they destroyed large parts of Jenin following the assassination by an Arab gunman of a British colonial official, W. S. S. Moffat, in the town in August 1938. Generally, the army and colonial authorities singled out smaller, remote villages in rural areas of Palestine for incremental punitive measures. Villages that proved particularly recalcitrant would be entirely demolished, reduced to "mangled masonry," as happened to the village of Mi'ar, north of Acre in October 1938.[31] On other occasions, the British used sea mines from the battleship HMS *Malaya* to destroy houses.[32] Sometimes the charges laid were so large that neighboring

houses collapsed or flying debris hit bystanders. The laying of oversized explosive charges by Royal Engineers to effect maximum damage was intentional. British troops even made Palestinians demolish their own houses, brick by brick.[33]

During army searches, soldiers would surround a village and then detach and guard the women and children separately from the men who were often held in wire "cages" during protracted searches, while soldiers searched the empty houses, often destroying everything therein, burning grain, and pouring olive oil over household food and effects.[34] The village men meanwhile were "screened" by having them pass in front of hooded or hidden Arab informers who would nod when a "suspect" was found, or by British officials checking their papers against lists of suspects, a familiar tactic adopted in later counterinsurgencies. If the army was following up an intelligence lead and looking for a suspect or hidden weapons, any destruction was incidental to the searching of properties. Troops also used primitive metal detectors on such operations.[35] The army used the excuse of weapons searches to justify damage if there were complaints.

Destruction of property was not part of soldiers' training, but once prompted they did the job with gusto. The officer tasked with checking on a search carried out in one village reprimanded a corporal who left intact a beautiful cabinet full of glassware and then proceeded to destroy the cabinet and its contents himself.[36] The British designated some searches as "punitive." Recalling such raids, a private remarked, "Oh yes, punitive. You smashed wardrobes with plates, glass mirrors in and furniture, anything you could see you smashed."[37] The local district officer instructed Colonel J. S. S. Gratton, then a subaltern with the Hampshire Regiment, that the unit's search of Safad (Zefat) was a punitive raid, meaning that (in Gratton's words) they could:

> knock the place about. And it's very alien to a chap like you or me to go in and break the chair and kick chatty in with all the oil in and mixed it in with the bedclothes and break all the windows and everything. You don't feel like doing it. And I remember the adjutant coming in and saying, "You are not doing your stuff. They're perfectly intact all those houses you've just searched. This is what you've got to do." And he picked up a pick helve and sort of burst everything. I said, "Right OK," so I got hold of the soldiers and said, "this is what you've got to do," you know. And I don't think they liked it much but once they'd started on it you couldn't stop them. And you'd never seen such devastation.[38]

Following the cordon and search of the town of Safad by the Hampshire Regiment, a senior police officer in Palestine, Sir Charles Tegart, noted simply that the soldiers "did their work thoroughly," adding that local villagers had little sympathy for the townsfolk of Safad, who had hitherto

been spared and who would now "know what has been happening to us."[39] For the soldiers, their job in Palestine was simply, "to bash anybody on the head who broke the law, and if he didn't want to be bashed on the head then he had to be shot. It may sound brutal but in fact it was a reasonably nice, simple objective and the soldiers understood it."[40] Hilda Wilson, a British school teacher in Palestine, concluded that the reason for soldiers' destructiveness was that they were "bored stiff" and had no social amenities, compounded by the alienation that they felt serving "in a distant country among people who, they are told, are the 'enemy.' "[41]

Arab villagers were trapped between the hammer of rebel operations and the anvil of British forces.[42] When the police went to investigate a report that rebels had blocked the road with trenches and roadblocks near the village of Shafa 'Amr, the "local inhabitants protested that they had been compelled to do this sabotage by rebel gangs, but this excuse did not spare them from a fine of £[Palestine]700," and they had to repair the road.[43] The collective fines imposed were a heavy burden for Palestinian villagers, especially when the authorities also took away all the livestock, smashed up properties, imposed long curfews and established police posts, blew up houses, and detained some or all of the menfolk in distant detention camps. Fines varied but could be as high as £P5,000, and they had to be paid promptly in cash or in the form of produce such as animals, eggs, and cereals.[44] To make matters worse, the rebels also fined or robbed villages for not supporting the revolt, £P1,000 in one case and £P10–100 per household in another.[45] To give a sense of the magnitude of the fines, in the late 1930s a British police officer of constable rank earned a basic pay of £P11 per month rising to £P18 for an assistant inspector, an attractive wage that drew police recruits to Palestine. By contrast, Rosemary Sayigh has estimated the average yearly wage of a Palestinian rural family at between £P25 and £P30.[46] In the village of Tira (or Taybe/Tayyiba, the transliteration from Arabic to Hebrew to English is not clear), peasants responded to a fine of £P2,000 by picking up what they could carry and leaving.[47]

If villagers were unable to pay collective fines in currency, they paid in produce: "As usual police were called to do the dirty work, collecting chickens, eggs and grain from each family and taking them to Haifa for sale."[48] Police activity often went beyond the forced requisitioning of produce, as when the police went to a village after rebels had killed some "wogs," at which point they indulged in indiscriminate violence against the villagers rather than the rebels. "By the time we arrived of course they had vanished into the blue but we had orders to decimate the whole place which we did, all animals and grain and food were destroyed and the sheikh and all his hangers on beaten up with rifle butts. There will be quite a number of funerals their [*sic*] I should imagine."[49] Villagers were in permanent debt as their *mukhtars* (headmen) attempted to gather in official fines from their penniless and hungry villagers. Certain

villagers were also required to produce bonds of up to £P100 and additional sureties to ensure their good behavior. Failure to pay could result in imprisonment.[50]

When on February 18, 1938, rebels ambushed a car 12 miles south of Haifa, killing an RAF officer and badly wounding a British woman passenger, near the *bad* village of Ijzim (*good* and *bad* villages are recurring terms in British files), the authorities brought in a tracker dog to pick up the scent:

> The trail was expected to lead up the Wadi Mughar to the bad village of Igzim [Ijzim in literary Arabic], and B Company, less one platoon, under Major Clay was detailed as dog escort. The fourth platoon was given the task of rounding up 2,300 goats and 200 sheep for confiscation as a punishment on the inhabitants of the area in which the crime was committed. The dog quickly took up the trail and moved up the Wadi Mughar to Igzim, where it "marked" a house on the northern end of the village. It was then taken back to the coast road and put onto another clue, again tracking back to the same village, but to a house opposite the first one. When searched, however, the owners of both houses were absent. The whole village was then cordoned and searched, while reports were sent to Brigade Headquarters in Haifa on the result of the dog's tracking. Later in the morning orders were received to demolish the two houses marked by the dogs.[51]

A policeman present at Ijzim, Sydney Burr, wrote to his parents that the brutality of the search was such as to prompt a complaint about army behavior from the Anglican mission in Palestine.[52]

MILITARY OPERATIONS, INTELLIGENCE, COLLABORATION, AND PSEUDO WARFARE

Alongside the targeting of Arab civilians, the army developed counterinsurgency tactics in the field, especially after October 1938 when the resolution of the Munich crisis in Europe meant that Britain could release two infantry divisions for service in Palestine and swamp the country with troops. The tactics used were not new but variations on existing counterinsurgency methods, developed from the army's long experience of fighting colonial "small wars" across the empire. Troops formed lightly armed mobile columns—some with donkeys in the back of lorries for extra mobility, called "donkvans"—and using radios and ground-to-air signaling called in RAF close air support—what was called "airpin" or the "XX" system, the latter because of the named grids on army maps used to direct the aircraft to the right spot. The army hunted gangs of rebels across the rough countryside, coordinating and closing in with other ground units, maintaining the pressure on rebel groups that diminished in size as the revolt waned. This was a subaltern's war: battles were

small-scale affairs and rebels making good use of the terrain to escape after engaging with machine guns and grenades. The rebels also laid mines—what we would now call "IEDs"—to ambush military vehicles, such as near the village of al-Bassa, an incident discussed in full elsewhere.[53] The casualties in counterinsurgency firefights were usually low. The British pinned rebel groups and destroyed them, as when men from the Royal Ulster and West Kent regiments machine-gunned rebels as they came out to surrender near Jenin: "At one time the Ulsters and West Kents caught about 60 of them [Arab guerrillas] in a valley and as they walked out with their arms up mowed them down with machine guns. I inspected them afterwards and most of them were boys between 16 and 20 from Syria. . . . No news of course is given to the newspapers, so what you read in the papers is just enough to allay public uneasiness in England."[54] On at least one occasion, rebel fire brought down RAF warplanes. (Local villagers would at times augment rebel forces.) RAF warplanes helped with reconnaissance and "fixing" villages, which intelligence said held rebels and which, surrounded at night by soldiers, would be searched at daybreak, with anyone running from the village a target for the machine guns of the RAF. The official policy was not to bomb villages from the air but to bomb and strafe rebels found in open areas, not least because of the possible adverse publicity that would result, especially from the Italian and German press eager to criticize Britain in this period. That said, Bahjat Abu Gharbiyah claimed to this author that the RAF used warplanes to bomb villages in rural Palestine.[55]

Good intelligence was vital for army operations in the field, coming initially from RAF-based Special Service Officers (SSOs), tasked strategically with running empire intelligence across the Middle East, and from a relationship that the army established between Jewish and British military intelligence. The Jews had been building files on the Palestinians from the 1920s. The army had poor intelligence at the start of the Arab revolt, not least as the Palestine police force had collapsed, and short of Arabic speakers, so the army naturally turned to its enemy's enemy. The result was an intimate relationship between British military intelligence and the Jews.[56] When it came to intelligence gathering, the British Army at this time embedded military intelligence within line regiments—Britain did not (re)establish the Intelligence Corps of the Army until 1940—which worked alongside the RAF SSOs.[57] The army seconded regimental officers in Palestine for intelligence duties, as with A. C. Simonds of the Berkshire Regiment, who admitted that most of his intelligence came from Jewish sources and from the Palestinian Nashashibi family that was willing to work with the British.[58] British Army and SSO intelligence used information from Arab sources—and Arab informers accompanied troops in the field on operations—alongside material that came from collaboration with the Jewish intelligence network, run in the field by Jews such

as Reuven Zaslany (later Shiloah) and Ezra Danin, the latter based in the Jewish settlement of Hadera.[59] Simonds remarked how the "Head of the Jewish Agency Intelligence Service" was his "friend."[60]

For instance, when Jews heard of a rebel band in the locality, they passed the information to the army, "who took immediate action"—British officers accompanied one Jew and his Arab informer in the former's car to survey the rebels before calling in the army for an assault.[61] Danin provided informers and detailed information for the British who in return told him about their operations. The British gave Danin direct access to their operations, including investigation of arrested gang members; Danin helped the army by supplying the Arab informers who picked out supposed rebels on village searches.[62] Danin's published collection of captured Arabic documents from 1944 is testament to the information exchange with the British, the documents coming from joint operations.[63]

Danin was one of a group of Jews with good links to the cadre of British intelligence officers in Palestine. For instance, in late 1936, Joshua Gordon was the Jewish agency's liaison with the RAF intelligence officer in Nablus, Captain Windsor, known to the Jews as "The Duke."[64] In 1938, Windsor set up a meeting between Danin and Army Captain Fitzpatrick, intelligence officer for the 9th Royal Hussars. An officer called Colonel Lash—code-named "The Lion" by the Jews and referenced as (later) Brigadier Norman Lash of the Arab Legion—replaced Windsor.[65] J. P. Domville was another key British intelligence operative, an RAF SSO officer, who went to serve in Iraq after December 1937.[66] Zaslani was Domville's interpreter, and they were friends well into the 1940s; the Jewish political leader, David Ben-Gurion, met with Domville. Earlier, in 1934, Hos, another Jewish agent, had characterized Domville as the country's "best Zionist informer on the English."[67] There was another SSO officer, much used by the Jews, Hackett, Jews referring to him as A. Hackett-Fine (a phonetic transliteration from Hebrew, code-named "Khamis" and an MI5 or MI6 agent), who replaced Lash and with whom Danin was close.[68]

The cozy relationship between British and Jewish intelligence officers was a combined effort to defeat and destabilize Arab rebels. The British could deal with a local imperial hot spot that was a strategic distraction in the years leading up to World War II, while for the Jews it mitigated the Arab violence directed at their community. The British were supporting the Jews' efforts with the strength of the British armed force, giving operatives such as Danin access to the heart of the British military machine. To draw an imperial comparison to Kenya in the 1950s—another colony with an articulate, nonnative settler community—it was as if the British handed over part of their military operations, such as pseudo warfare, to the white settlers of the Kenya Regiment and the Kenya Police

Reserve, with the Kikuyu Home Guard playing the part of the peace bands. (Of course, in some measure this is what happened in Kenya.) The collaboration between the British and the Jews would have spectacular "blowback" later on when Britain's Jewish erstwhile friends became enemies, and in a well-organized revolt after 1945, they threw the British out of Palestine.

Arab collaborators in "peace bands" supplemented the work of the army, a subject that will resonate with other chapters in this volume that touch on the work of pseudo gangs. The British authorities worked with the Palestinian Nashashibi family—in charge of the National Defence Party (the Opposition)—to raise local pro-government Arab militia forces known as peace bands. The bands opposed the violent antigovernment direction of the Arab revolt led by the Palestinian Husayni family, headed by Hajj Amin al-Husayni (the "Mufti"), and they were active in the second phase of the Arab revolt after September 1937. The idea of forming peace bands was not new, not for the British anyway, who had a tradition of using local forces to maintain imperial order and to fight colonial rebellions—*divide et impera*—that predated the conquest of Palestine by Britain. The peace bands in Palestine were not, however, locally recruited indigenous soldiers in British-officered units, as with the king's African Rifles or the Gurkhas, nor were they comparable to local white settlers in units such as the Kenya Regiment. The peace bands were part of a strange, amorphous tradition of imperial control that came to prominence after 1945 in counterinsurgencies in Malaya and Kenya where the British deployed turned insurgent rebel soldiers in pseudo gangs—or "pseudo gangsters" and "contras" as critics have put it—to gather intelligence and sow discord within rebel ranks by pretending to be guerrillas.[69] Such units might comprise British soldiers pretending to be rebels, as happened in Kenya in the 1950s when white service personnel "blacked up" using burnt cork and greasepaint to infiltrate insurgent black Mau Mau units.[70] Soldiers in such units could speak local languages as a "native," as do *Mista'arvim* (literally "Arabized") Israeli security personnel in their fight against the Palestinians today. White Rhodesian soldiers in the 1970s in the Selous Scouts military unit that fought insurgent black African guerrillas, a force with mixed white and black soldiers, also blackened their faces, with little success—hence the employment of black soldiers in the unit, most of whom were pro-government black Rhodesians, alongside "turned" black guerrillas. One white Selous Scouts soldier even tried to dye his blue eyes brown.[71] (A recent collection of memoirs of service in the Selous Scouts provides excellent coverage of the unit's work.[72]) Pseudo warfare often merged with the use of local "loyalists" against rebels who might be indistinguishable from the enemy, or not. In Palestine in the 1930s, the British supported the Jews against Arab rebels, recruiting and arming thousands of extra Jewish supernumerary police—14,411

according to one source[73]—and establishing British Army Officer Orde Wingate's Special Night Squads that combined British soldiers and Jewish *Haganah* fighters and that fought against the Arabs in Galilee in 1938.[74] The Jews used the training afforded by the Special Night Squads in their fight later against the British; many key Israeli soldiers after 1948, such as Moshe Dayan, having served in Wingate's unit. (There is a question mark surrounding the methods used by the Special Night Squads—"extreme and cruel," noted one colonial official, Sir Hugh Foot, a force that tortured, whipped, executed, and abused Arabs according to another source—but is a subject beyond the scope of this chapter.[75]) During the Arab revolt in Palestine, soldiers and police officers on operations also disguised themselves as Arabs in what they called "Q squads."[76] British counter-gangs could include army personnel in special squads, such as the one led by Major Roy Farran in Palestine in 1947. These forces were not traditionally formed military units. Other colonial armies did similar things: the French with the *harkis* in Algeria and the Portuguese with the *flechas* in Mozambique, for instance.

The "collaborators" in the peace gangs never won the war for the British, but they helped the authorities by supercharging endemic feuding in rural Palestine, divided Britain's enemies, acted as a force multiplier of sorts, and spread psychological disorder among the Palestinians. This was an early example of "black ops" and one that bears comparison to the French army's *guerre révolutionnaire* of the 1950s. For instance, the Nashashibis and pro-government Palestinians from the village of Abu Ghosh produced leaflets purporting to come from the rebels but which subtly undermined the insurgents' cause.[77] The peace bands assisted well-established British punitive pacification tactics that pivoted on punishing the villagers on whom rebels relied for support, putting them on notice, making them choose sides, and drawing them away from the rebellion. This had an impact, and by October 1938, the rebels were fining villages that cooperated with the peace bands: "We have warned the villages not to cooperate with the traitors and we shall impose a heavy fine on them."[78] Elsewhere, there was a two-hour battle where rebels killed 20 "traitors."[79]

THE JEWISH REVOLT, 1944–48

While the defeat of the Arab revolt freed up the army for the war in Europe after September 1939, Britain's decision in 1939 to end its support for Jewish immigration to Palestine led to a new insurgency in Palestine as Jews moved to throw off British rule. Jewish extremists in *LEHI* assassinated the British minister, Lord Moyne, in the Middle East in Cairo in 1944, signaling the start of a wave of attacks against British targets that

carried on until the end of the British Mandate. The mainstream *Haganah*, the military wing of the Jewish agency, led the Jewish insurgency, tens of thousands strong and divided into frontline and second echelon forces, its prime aim being "constructive" terror attacks so as to facilitate the influx of Jewish refugees escaping the Holocaust and trying to reach Palestine. The *Haganah* became the Israeli Defence Forces in 1948, augmented by the men of the *Irgun Zvai Leumi*. Women fighters served in these organizations, the subject of interesting recent research.[80] The Jewish insurgent groups united in 1945 against the British in a well-organized, modern, and disciplined front, one that benefitted from the prior training afforded by the Special Night Squads and from the men who had served in the British Army—including in the Jewish Brigade—during World War II. Fund-raising trips to the United States brought in money and arms for the Jewish rebellion. The Jews were formidable opponents, and they kept in check, while fighting the British, the latent disunity between the different insurgent groups, differences that finally led to intra-Jewish fighting in June 1948—what is known as the "Atlalena" affair. There were no Jewish collaborators willing to form pseudo gangs, so the British formed their own irregular units led by men such as Major Roy Farran, as will be seen.

The British tried (and failed) with a punitive method called "cordon and search," used in Jewish neighborhoods in built-up areas such as Tel Aviv. The urban environment was a much tougher place in which to fight, presaging later British counterinsurgencies in Nicosia, Aden, and Belfast. Cordon and search was the hybrid endpoint of the army's pre-1945 experiences, similar in some ways to the methods used against the Arabs a decade earlier and harsh enough to earn global opprobrium but not harsh enough to defeat Jewish insurgents. Collective punishment failed when employed against the Jews. Propaganda, global politics, lack of information on the Jews, and poor intelligence conspired to confound the army. The nature of the opposition was crucial. The Jews in Palestine were articulate and vocal, had an excellent intelligence service known as the *Shai*—the forerunner of Israeli military intelligence and *Shin Bet*—which had infiltrated the British police and colonial government, had support in the United States, were largely European (namely, "white") in origin, and had been well organized since the 1920s.[81] Race had a part to play, not least as harsh actions outside of Europe against non-white peoples with no lobbying power or presence in Britain's decision-making structure were bound to be treated differently when compared to, say, European Ashkenazi Jews in British Mandate Palestine in the 1940s. The British could not easily treat the Jews as "wogs" were across the empire—to use the contemporary phrase.

Jewish fighters matched the British. They retaliated against British reprisal methods, launching terror attacks in the United Kingdom and

capturing and flogging British soldiers (including officers) in reply to the authorities' caning of a Jewish insurgent guilty of a bank robbery. In 1947, *Irgun* fighters seized two British NCOs in an effort to save fighters about to be hanged by the British. When the hangings went ahead, the Jews killed (and booby-trapped the bodies of) the two British sergeants, matching official reprisals with unofficial reprisals in a way that the Arabs had never done in the 1930s. There were also spectacular terrorist attacks, such as in 1946 when the *Irgun* blew up the wing of the luxury King David Hotel in Jerusalem that housed army intelligence officers, killing almost 100 people (including Jews and Arabs working in the hotel). The largest mainstream force, the *Haganah*, benefitted from the extreme shock action of the ultras in the *Irgun* and *LEHI*, while being able morally to distance itself from outrages, such as the assassination by *LEHI* gunmen of the peace envoy, Count Bernadotte, in 1948. The Jews targeted British intelligence officers, knowing these were the key link people for the British—echoes here of Michael Collins's attack on British intelligence operatives in Dublin in 1920 in the IRA's war against the Crown. The Jews were also attacking at a time when Britain was reassembling its Middle East strategy and considering whether it needed a base in Palestine. The Jewish military forces combined terrorist attacks with giving practical help to Jews trying to get to Palestine from Europe. British intelligence gathering on their Jewish opponents was poor; meanwhile, headed by the *Shai*, the Jews built up an alternative intelligence network. Information was the key component to success or failure, something that the Jews knew from early on in the Mandate period.[82]

In Britain's previous campaign against rebels elsewhere, the army had employed considerable force and had been successful. The same methods tried against the Jews did not work. Thus, in April 1946, the Stern Gang killed seven soldiers from the Parachute Regiment. This provoked a near mutiny among the troops, to the extent that the senior officer of the 6th Airborne Division went to the British Palestine high commissioner to demand a punishment of a £1 million fine, requisitioning and blowing up of Jewish buildings, and the closure of restaurants and businesses. The high commissioner agreed only to restaurants being closed. Why was there such a limited reply? After all, in the 1930s, the response to such an outrage would have been draconian, had it been conducted by Palestinian Arab guerrillas. But the British had to consider the political imperative of maintaining good relations with America—where pro-Zionist Jewish Americans and parts of the government were supportive of a Jewish state—and this combined with the existence of a vibrant local Jewish democracy and the presence of the world's press to make Britain's position untenable. The USSR also supported the newly formed Israel.[83]

There were also practical problems with cordon and search. When Operation *Hippo-Elephant* imposed military rule on Tel Aviv in 1947,

it lasted for two weeks because the army could not maintain the troop numbers required to contain a substantial urban area. Cordon and search in Palestine found little and contained even less. It simply antagonized moderate Jews and provided good propaganda for the enemy. The response to cordon and search could also be swift. During Operation *Shark,* British paratroopers sealed off Tel Aviv: 17,000 troops for four days to deal with an urban area of 170,000 Jewish inhabitants. During this operation, Police CID Sergeant T. G. Martin recognized a key terrorist suspect dressed as a rabbi. Two months later, Jewish gunmen shot Martin dead.

One of the most spectacular events of the Palestine insurgency was itself recognition of the British failure to get to grips with the opposition. In 1947, the British set up several special squads to tackle the terrorists—the infamous "Farran affair."[84] These murky groups of British soldiers were, at worst, death squads who targeted suspected Jewish terrorists; they certainly used unorthodox methods. But even this did not work. Under the direction of Brigadier Bernard Fergusson of World War II Burma Chindit fame, the authorities had sanctioned a dirty war of sorts. This was not new and it would happen again, but in Palestine the squads came to an abrupt end in the face of Jewish protests. Major Roy Farran, formerly of the SAS, and in charge of one of the squads, stood trial for the murder of Alexander Rubowitz of *LEHI* who went missing in May 1947. Farran fled to Syria, under threat of prosecution; a Jewish terrorist revenge bomb sent to his family's U.K. address killed his brother. Interestingly, without Hebrew speakers, both squads were not intelligence units but, rather, an executive arm of the CID branch of the British police in Palestine.

AFTERWORD

By late 1947, the British had had enough and passed the problem of Palestine to the United Nations. The Jews had succeeded in their mission, and in May 1948, Israel was formed. While the British operational method was flawed, a few years later British forces would be successful in Malaya, Kenya, and to an extent, Cyprus. Here Britain held the political cards—offering independence—and the opposition that the army faced was not so well mobilized as in Palestine in the 1940s, nor did it have significant levels of international support. The British Army entered the Palestine campaign against the Arabs in the 1930s with counterinsurgency methods that worked; it was ill prepared intellectually and organizationally for the Jewish revolt in the 1940s. The Jewish insurgency was exceptional, and the British could not deal with it using dated prewar methods. After Palestine, the British learned from their mistakes and

fought with some success against insurgents elsewhere in the collapsing British Empire, right up to the Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Indeed, during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the army successfully played the long game, combining increasingly low-key soldiering with criminalization of the enemy and passing operations to the police, creating a gold standard of how to do such things. The Troubles represented a shift for the army from imperial to postimperial operations, the definitive end to the sorts of operations described in this chapter in the context of Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s.

NOTES

1. This chapter draws upon material from the author's "From Law and Order to Pacification: Britain's Suppression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–39," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39, no. 2 (Winter 2010), pp. 6–22. Used by permission of University of California Press.

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39. Diary, January 22, 1938, Tegart Papers, GB 165-0281, Box 4, MEC.

40. Major General H. E. N. Bredin, 4550, p. 10, IWMSA.

41. Diary, Wilson Papers, GB 165-0302, pp. 28–29, MEC.

42. Report dated May 5, 1939, 10 pages in J & E Mission Papers, GB 165-0161, Box 62, File 1, p. 3, MEC.

43. Palmer, "Second Battalion," p. 100. £P1 equaled £1 U.K. sterling.

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50. See the files in M4826/26, Israel State Archive, Jerusalem.

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59. War Diary, May 3, 1939, 2nd Battalion, Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, QRWS/3/6/6, Surrey History Centre.

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CHAPTER 5

The Defeat of a Colonial School of Pacification: The French in Indochina, 1945–54

Simon Robbins

As the Cold War descended over a Europe recovering from World War II, the French witnessed the dismantling of their colonial empire in the era of decolonization that followed. Refusing to relinquish illusions of imperial grandeur and to acknowledge the demands of colonial peoples for independence, the postwar French governments of the Fourth Republic were particularly stubborn in holding on to Indochina and Algeria, fighting long, brutal, and costly wars in a vain attempt to retain them. In her attempts to preserve her imperial estates, France could look to her long colonial experience. The strategy and techniques of pacification had been tried and tested during a number of campaigns fought by the French since the French Revolution, notably during the second half of the nineteenth century as a colonial empire second in size only to that of Britain was acquired and consolidated. During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras, notably in the Vendée, Calabria, and Spain, and while establishing their empire, the French faced a number of insurgent uprisings in which a peculiarly French approach to counterinsurgency was established. In particular, certain techniques of pacification emerged in Algeria in the 1840s, which were then further developed in Mexico, Indochina, Madagascar, and Morocco during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although there was no doctrine that was taught in a systematic fashion, the French army developed a broad and well-established counterinsurgency practice as a result of its colonial experience.[1]

The "colonial school" of warfare developed by Bugeaud was later refined into a more methodical style of counterinsurgency, which replaced the rapid military thrusts through insurgent territory, which had been used in Algeria in the 1840s. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Indochina, Madagascar, and Morocco, Joseph-Simon Galliéni and Louis-Hubert-Gonzalve Lyautey were the two great French exponents of a dual military-political strategy of progressive pacification. This strategy, known as *tache d'huile* (oil stain, patch, or slick), was used to establish a slow and methodical expansion of French authority over conquered territory. Galliéni employed the technique of "progressive occupation" in Tonkin in Indochina and Madagascar, establishing bases from which control of the area could be progressively extended.[2] Lyautey described the technique in a letter to Galliéni in November 1903. This stressed that the subjugation of colonies should be accomplished "not by mighty blows, but as a patch of oil spreads, through a step by step progression, playing alternately on all the local elements, utilising the divisions between tribes and between their chiefs."[3]

The "Galliéni method" of warfare, or pacification as it was later called, placed as much emphasis on political and socioeconomic as on military measures. Attacks by converging mobile columns on rebel strongholds were followed up with the introduction of amenities such as markets as well as posts designed to protect the population from insurgent attacks into "cleared" areas. In every subjugated region, the French built a network of blockhouses commanding the roads and serving as bases for further operations by light columns. This combination of static territorial control and mobile reserves had a long tradition in the French army, having been employed against Royalist uprisings during the French Revolution. Against widely dispersed revolts or tribal forces, it was considerably successful. Galliéni's methods were codified and elaborated by his enthusiastic subordinate, the cavalry officer, Lyautey, in a celebrated article, "Du Rôle Coloniale de L'armée" ("On the Army's Colonial Role"), published in the prestigious journal *Revue des Deux Mondes* in January 1900, which provided the classic statement of this doctrine.[4]

The *tache d'huile* doctrine was to provide some continuity between French counterinsurgency methods employed prior to World War II and after 1945—being the strategy applied by the French in attempting to combat the Maoist-style insurgency of the Viet Minh in French Indochina between 1946 and 1954. However, there were a number of problems with the doctrine. Following Bugeaud, both Galliéni and Lyautey, believing that a division of powers constituted a weakness, advocated uniting both administrative and military authority in military hands at all levels of the hierarchy, a system of unified territorial command known as *Cercles Militaires*. French administration, which was to go hand in hand with

a military presence, was placed in the hands of soldier administrators, causing disputes between the civilian and military authorities and ensuring that there was no real integration of the civil and military administrations. The theory and practice of the Colonial Army before 1914, notably unity of command (which resulted in military domination over civilian affairs), the importance of propaganda and of social and economic measures, and the system of close territorial control formed the backbone of *guerre révolutionnaire* in the 1950s.[5]

The brutal war against the Viet Minh in Indochina, which was to become the states of Vietnam—traditionally made up of the three kingdoms of Cochin-China (South Vietnam), Annam (Central Vietnam) and Tonkin (North Vietnam), Laos and Cambodia (Kampuchea)—broke out in earnest in December 1946. However, the attempt to reimpose French colonial rule did not progress according to plan. As the Dutch were to find out in modern-day Indonesia at the same time, the French discovered that the old colonial methods were no longer applicable. In the changed circumstances, which emerged in the aftermath of World War II, traditional French area-by-area methods of pacification no longer succeeded when facing continuous political subversion, which ensured escalating popular support, intelligence, recruits, sanctuaries, and supplies for the nationalist Viet Minh.[6] The inept French campaign in Indochina was later summarized by a French journalist, Lucien Bodard, who reflected that "the French Army, like a Louis Quinze armchair, was the masterpiece of an extinct civilisation."[7] The army's postwar analysis was more diplomatic, noting that:

> The experience of eight years of war does, however, suggest that the rules inherited from Lyautey and other great colonial leaders should be modified slightly. . . . It is not possible to undertake a policy of pacification in regions where the inhabitants have fallen under Communist influence as long as the Marxist organisation remains there.[8]

But this was not immediately apparent following the triumphal entry of General Philippe Leclerc de Hauteclocque into Saigon in October 1945. Outwardly, Saigon was again the "Paris of the Far East," providing a base for Leclerc to reestablish French control and to wipe out the Viet Minh. However, the French were on shaky ground, and Leclerc, a devout Catholic aristocrat, who had had a brilliant wartime career leading his division into Paris and Strasbourg, soon began to realize that the French lacked the men and equipment to achieve a decisive victory. Leclerc set about the reassertion of French control in the south, dispatching columns out into Cochin-China (one of the column leaders was Colonel, later General, Jacques Massu, who later served in Algeria), which were told to use minimum force and to avoid brutality or looting, wherever

possible. Questioning whether a full military reconquest of Indochina was feasible before leaving in July 1946, Leclerc warned that France was heading for a guerrilla war that she could neither win nor afford. After a brief tour in early 1947, by which time there was fighting throughout Vietnam, he concluded that 500,000 troops would be required to subjugate such resistance, but he was ignored. Although the French had superior military organization and modern equipment, notably aircraft, helicopters, and tanks, it was soon apparent that they lacked both popular support and local knowledge of the terrain and had badly underestimated the Viet Minh. The French no longer confronted ill-organized colonial rebels but instead faced disciplined and tenacious revolutionaries, who showed formidable dedication and political will in following a political-military strategy based on that of Mao Tse-tung in China. Entering the vacuum of power in 1945 that followed the defeat of Japan, the Viet Minh had already established their own infrastructure and "safe bases" in the rural areas of Vietnam, notably in North Vietnam (the "Viet Bac") and the Red River Delta. These sanctuaries made it possible to plan and organize for mobilizing the support of the population and for launching attritional guerrilla operations that wore down the French army prior to winning a conventional war to seize power.[9]

In 1947, the French removed the Viet Minh from the Hanoi area and were also able to reoccupy almost all of Laos. The French celebrated a decisive victory, but their euphoria proved to be misplaced. In reality, they lacked the manpower to prevent a Viet Minh withdrawal to their safe areas in the north from where they were able to relieve the sieges of Nam Dinh and Hué, and the situation in Cochin-China remained precarious. An uprising in Madagascar delayed the arrival of some badly needed reinforcements, which were rerouted while traveling to Indochina between April and July 1947. When the reinforcements finally arrived, pacification of Cochin-China was seen as the first priority. Thus, although suffering a setback, by withdrawing into the "safe bases," the Viet Minh led by Ho Chi Minh and General Giap were able to rebuild their forces and strengthen their hold on the population in Tonkin and Cochin-China, concentrating on political education, recruitment, and training, while maintaining a guerrilla campaign against the French occupation in most areas, but particularly in Cochin-China. For nearly three years, the French, convinced that the rebels had been defeated, did nothing to contest the Viet Minh's hold over the population, ignoring the implications of the successes of Mao's identical strategy in China. Attempts by General Jean Étienne Valluy during late 1947 failed to destroy the Viet Minh, and French operations during 1948 and early 1949 continued to be restricted by limited manpower and hesitation in Paris. Blaizot, the new commander in chief, wanted to lead a powerful force into the Tonkin mountains, the Viet Minh stronghold, but the French government refused to

denude Cochin-China, which was economically important, of troops. One commander, General Raoul Salan, was replaced because he was too outspoken in demanding reinforcements.[10]

Although some progress was made by the French in the Red River Delta and Cochin-China—where General Boyer de Latour du Moulin enjoyed success against the Viet Minh stronghold in the Plain of Reeds—overall, the French lost an opportunity in 1948 because of indecision and half-measures. Inadequate numbers of troops meant that the French were always faced by an ongoing dilemma of where to employ their meager forces as concentration in one area always risked defeat in others. The French were generally able to maintain control of the cities and roads, although ambushes became an increasing problem. They occupied the rice fields and jungle by day, but the insurgents ruled them by night. Indeed, when Mao emerged as the victor in China in October 1949, the French position in Indochina was already compromised, and once supplies began to flow into the Viet Bac from China, the strategic balance tilted decisively against the French. China provided the Viet Minh with international recognition and an external safe haven, allowing the Viet Minh to make the transition from a purely guerrilla force to the formation of regular units that received Chinese military equipment and Chinese training missions. By 1954, the Viet Minh had about 125,000 regulars and 350,000 militia. The Viet Minh were officially recognized by China in January 1950 and later by the Soviet Union. With the supply from their allies of enough trucks, artillery, and machine guns to equip three divisions, the Viet Minh were able to put some 30 regular units into the field. These forces were employed at first against the smaller frontier posts and then against the larger ones, notably on the Route Coloniale 4, which linked Lang Son and Cao Bang.[11]

Major General Edward G. Lansdale, visiting Indochina in 1953, "was amazed at the hundreds of forts ... ranging from big complexes of bunkers and trench systems to little *Beau Geste* movie set forts that housed a squad, a platoon, or a company." This resulted in a strategy in which "most of the French Union forces were manning static defense positions," leaving "most of the countryside" in the hands of the enemy.[12] A large percentage of the troops served as garrisons for forts of concrete and bamboo. Strongpoints, whether large like Cao Bang or Dien Bien Phu or small like the hundreds of *postes* established in Tonkin or the Red River Delta as part of the de Lattre Line, proved vulnerable to defeat in detail, being often overrun by human wave assaults. The tendency of the French to remain in static positions, especially at night, and to rely on sporadic large-scale search and destroy operations into Viet Minh base areas, although forcing the Viet Minh onto the defensive, permitted them to dominate the countryside and its population. French successes were usually the result of large-scale frontal assaults on defended positions by the

Viet Minh, but these were the exception. Manning static defenses also reduced the available manpower for mobile operations. The French had totally misinterpreted the nature of the threat posed by the Viet Minh. Information about the organization and strength of guerrilla forces and, more important, the political infrastructure of the Communist Party was lacking, and, no serious attempts were made to rectify this. There were, for example, no policies designed to tempt deserters from the Viet Minh or to recruit captured guerrillas into "pseudo gangs" for deployment against their erstwhile colleagues. The lack of men knowledgeable in the local languages and customs and of good tactical intelligence meant that the troops were largely blind and often brutalized the population in an attempt to extract information. The French were thus vulnerable to ambushes by the elusive guerrillas, owing to the lack of intelligence, and their dependency on the roads for movement, owing to a lack of helicopters, which were still an undeveloped innovation. As a result, the French continued to employ inappropriate and outdated tactics, which resulted in them being outmaneuvered and outfought in a revolutionary war that they failed to comprehend.[13]

Thus, when in late 1949 the Viet Minh went on the offensive, the French were caught unprepared with their troops badly deployed in isolated garrisons. These had previously been employed successfully in North Africa to control and intimidate the local population but now merely tied down large numbers of troops in static defenses. These defenses, which ranged from major defensive complexes manned by large formations to small outposts garrisoned by small units, were largely static and failed to prevent the enemy from dominating the rural areas. The outposts in the jungle often consisted only of a squad of soldiers under a junior officer or NCO and, as is well described in Graham Greene's novel, *The Quiet American*, were isolated and extremely vulnerable to attack, becoming death traps for their garrisons. Even where the garrisons were more substantial—such as "hedgehogs" or well-armed outposts that were considered militarily self-sufficient and impregnable—as along the Cao Bang-Lang Son Ridge in northeastern Vietnam, the French were unable to hold their positions. The logistical support for the French garrisons was reliant upon mechanized transport, which when traveling either through difficult terrain or along the Route Coloniale 4, linking Lang Son and Cao Bang, was often ambushed. As a result, casualties were high and French morale declined. Thus, when the Viet Minh switched to direct attacks on the ridge garrisons, the outpost of Dong Khe was captured in September 1950, forcing the French to evacuate Cao Bang while under constant attack. By the end of October, the French had lost over 6,000 casualties and had been driven out of the northeast of the country, leaving it to be developed as the strongest of the communist bases. By 1950, the French had lost any realistic opportunity for victory.[14]

The French should have reappraised their strategy following this disaster, but a reluctance to admit defeat and subsequent events prevented this. Believing that the French were on the run, Giap launched an all-out assault on the Red River Delta, hoping to administer the *coup de grace* and take Hanoi. This was premature as the French refused to admit defeat and the French government responded to the *débâcle* of the so-called Battle of the Frontiers in 1950–51 by dispatching substantial reinforcements to Vietnam and appointing the exceptional General Jean Joseph Marie Gabriel de Lattre de Tassigny as both commander in chief and governor general. Arriving in December 1950, de Lattre at once reinvigorated and transformed his command, summarily dismissing many officers, and withdrew the remaining garrisons into the delta region. He then established garrisons on the approaches to Hanoi and reorganized the elite units of his forces such as the Paras, Marines, and Foreign Legion, into mobile groups, which with artillery, armor, and air support formed a general reserve. Thus, Giap's large-scale conventional attacks between January and June 1951 were badly defeated by superior French firepower, losing approximately 12,000 casualties. This victory appeared to exonerate the principles of pacification and set a pattern for future French campaigns, which henceforth were designed to exploit the French technological superiority and employ the firepower of their artillery and air assets. The de Lattre Line—a complicated defensive system of mutually supporting concrete blockhouses—was built around the delta to defend the French base and its population against the Viet Minh.[15]

In accordance with Mao's strategy of revolutionary warfare, Giap reverted to guerrilla warfare. French attempts to break out of the delta defenses with their mobile reserves failed in late 1951 (de Lattre's capture of Hoa Binh) and in early 1952 (Operation "Lorraine" when Salan attacked the Viet Minh supply dumps at Phu Tho and Phu Doan, north of the Red River). This was the result of determined guerrilla attacks. By early 1953, Giap had recovered the military initiative, and the French were running short of options. A Viet Minh invasion of northern Laos in April 1953 forced Salan to commit a substantial part of his army to "hedgehog" positions on the Plain of Jars, further weakening his capabilities and limiting the reserves available for an offensive. With hindsight, it can be said that overall the strategy of pacification had failed, although in some areas there had been some initial success. For example, in the province of My Tho in the Mekong Delta, the French had reversed the years of nationalist dominance during 1947–50 by creating alliances with the local enemies, notably the political and religious competitors, of the Viet Minh, who persecuted officials, landlords, and religious groups and killed "collaborators." During 1950–52, the area was almost completely "pacified" by the French as a result of their alliance with the religious sects (the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai) in the Mekong Delta, and the local

guerrillas and their cadres were exiled in the Plain of Reeds. However, during 1953–54, the situation changed, owing to the brutality and political weakness of the colonial regime and French military setbacks, which resulted in the demoralization of the French and their allies, and saw a resurgence of the insurgents, who became once again the dominant force.[16]

This, however, was not immediately apparent to the French. General Henri-Eugène Navarre, a cavalry officer with no previous experience of field command who became commander in chief in May 1953, replacing Salan, was instructed to adopt an overall defensive strategy in the north for a year. During this time, only minor tactical offensive operations were to be conducted to mop up the delta while preparing for a major campaign to bring the Viet Minh to the negotiating table. In November 1953, Navarre dropped paratroopers into the valley of Dien Bien Phu in Tonkin (Operation "Castor") to establish a hedgehog, which would cut Viet Minh communications with northern Laos. The plan was to repeat the defeat inflicted on Giap at Na San in November 1952. Owing to poor French intelligence, the outpost at Dien Bien Phu, which was isolated and dependent upon air supply, was surprised by a concentration of overwhelming Viet Minh strength. The French had totally misinterpreted the threat posed by the Viet Minh. Although French intelligence, both tactical and strategic, was good, notably on the buildup of the regular formations of the Viet Minh and provided a good picture of their location and intentions, it was often unimaginative. The complacency and overconfidence of the high command, which was reluctant to accept the unpleasant reality that the war might be unwinnable with the limited resources available, often undermined clear analysis of the available intelligence. At Dien Bien Phu, the results of this attitude were disastrous. On May 7, 1954, Dien Bien Phu surrendered and, although the French regrouped, the war was in effect over. As the French were militarily bankrupt and *la sale guerre* was progressively more unpopular, the government of Pierre Mendès-France was forced to end the French presence in Indochina. The last troopship sailed from Saigon in November 1954, leaving both Laos and Cambodia as independent states and Vietnam divided arbitrarily along the seventeenth parallel.[17]

There were a number of reasons for the French defeat. There was little attempt by the French to coordinate their civil and military efforts. Political instability in France and constant changes of government prevented the implementation of consistent policies. Coming so soon after the shocks of 1940–45, the war in Indochina was highly unpopular, ensuring that politicians who were desperate for domestic support did little to provide adequate resources for the war. For example, an amendment to the Budget Law passed in 1950 restricted the deployment of conscripts to the "homeland" territory of France, Algeria, and the occupation zones of

Germany. Conscripts could not be sent to Indochina unless they volunteered and very few did so. The fact that conscripts did not serve in Indochina meant that there was little real commitment to the war by ordinary French men and women. The war was increasingly unpopular in France, with the percentage of support in polls falling from 37 percent in July 1947 to 19 percent by July 1949. Many Socialists and the radical leader, Pierre Mendès-France, opposed the war. The substantial Communist Party was openly hostile, taking every opportunity to hamper the war effort, calling strikes in arsenals and ports, and even sabotaging equipment and stores waiting for transport to Indochina. Demonstrations and hostility meant that gendarmes had to be deployed to safeguard the embarkation of troops overseas, returning wounded could not return to Paris or receive blood from the national blood donor organization, and citations for bravery were not published. This caused a backlash from the Right, which contended that if Indochina was lost, the rest of the French Empire would soon follow.[18]

During the campaign in Indochina, some officers increasingly found themselves in dangerous conflict with their political masters of the Fourth Republic, who singularly failed to provide any sustained or well-directed leadership during the subsequent era of colonial disintegration. With such an essentially peripherally driven imperial policy, successive French governments were all but held hostage by colonial interests, which were highly resistant to the notion of making political concessions to indigenous groups. With no less than seven different political parties operating in the Fourth Republic within an unstable system of proportional representation, the influence of the colonial lobby was increased. This was particularly so in the case of the Catholic Right-of-Center *Mouvement Republicain Populaire* (Popular Republican Movement, MRP), whose adherents invariably secured the foreign overseas territories and Indochina ministries in successive coalitions and opposed any suggestion of independence. Moreover, the support for Ho Chi Minh by the French Communist Party tended to make it difficult for other parties to entertain negotiation with the Viet Minh and drove the Socialists into coalition with the imperially minded parties if they were to share the fruits of office.[19]

French colonial forces, composed of regular soldiers from *La Coloniale*, the *Légion Etrangère*, and North African *Tirailleurs*, suffered heavy casualties (3,500, of whom 352 were officers, killed since September 1945) and a drop in morale. As a result, they felt increasingly isolated by the perceived lack of domestic support in France for the war. Repulsed by the squalid and fractious nature of French politics, the army believed increasingly that French military efficiency in Indochina was undermined by the political instability of the Fourth Republic. There was a widely held perception among the officer corps that the major reason for defeat had been poor and irresolute leadership by the politicians. Failing to face or bring home

to an indifferent general public the realities of the conflict, the politicians were felt by the army to have failed either to deploy adequate numbers of troops to Indochina or to mobilize the support of the Home Front for a more rigorous conduct of the war.[20] One veteran noted bitterly that "now we know that a French Army, on no matter what territory it fights, will always be stabbed in the back."[21]

This lack of political direction was also reflected in the failure to establish a unified command structure for both the civilian and military administrations serving in Indochina similar to that established by the British with the appointments of Templer in Malaya and Harding in Cyprus. De Lattre held the posts of both civil and military authority in late 1950, but in fact could make few decisions and was allowed to display very little initiative by his political masters at home. This dual appointment was not repeated, and de Lattre's successors, Salan and Navarre, confronted not only intervention from Paris but also interference from a civilian governor general in Indochina. Following Dien Bien Phu, the commander in chief, Navarre, complained that he lacked not only clear instructions concerning the defense of Laos but also the necessary reinforcements, as a result of the failure to send conscripts to Indochina, and potential battle-winning equipment, notably helicopters. As *la sale guerre* dragged on, the officer corps blamed the politicians for the withdrawal from Indochina.[22]

There was little recognition that the insurgent threat was primarily a political one and little effort was made by the French to find a political solution or to counter Viet Minh efforts to mobilize popular support until it was too late. The old colonial mentality, notably the assumption that the indigenous population could be controlled, was difficult to alter. In fact, at the political level, the attractions of continuing the French role were undermined by the Viet Minh's exploitation of nationalist sentiment. Traditional French area-by-area methods of pacification could no longer succeed in the face of continuous political subversion, which ensured escalating popular support, generating advantages such as intelligence, recruits, sanctuaries, and supplies for the Viet Minh, and denying them to the French. The war in Indochina was essentially a colonial campaign to reassert French rule and France's position as a great, global power.[23]

The French solution for Indochina was to attempt to "divide and rule" by building an alternative to the Viet Minh during 1948–49 and peeling away noncommunist nationalists. The former Emperor Bao Dai returned to Indochina and proclaimed himself head of the state of Vietnam. But French officials could not yet countenance an independent Vietnamese nation-state and devolved only a limited measure of internal self-government, while maintaining control of diplomatic, economic, and military policy and continuing to employ military force to defeat the Viet Minh. Devolution of power was never extended to true independence,

international standing, and a truly effective national Vietnamese army. Thus, although recognized as head of an "independent" and unified Vietnam in March 1949—something denied to Ho Chi Minh in 1946—Bao Dai was discredited in the eyes of his people, both communist and anticommunist. Vietnam's "independence" was restricted by membership as an "associated state" of the French Union. Furthermore, although possessing ability, Bao Dai was known as the "emperor of the night clubs," and none of his successive governments gained any genuine mass support or showed any administrative capabilities.[24]

At the political level, the attractions of continuing the French role were undermined by the Viet Minh's exploitation of nationalist sentiment. Seeking support from Bao Dai and minority religious sects such as the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao gave the French little credibility, and the Viet Minh was able to establish a monopoly in terms of patriotism and nationalism, to which the French had no ideological reply. The failure of the Paris negotiations of 1947–49 had discredited French promises of independence, which were further damaged when it became apparent that they were not backed up by adequate force to secure their accomplishment. As a result, French propaganda lacked relevance to the cause of Vietnamese nationalism, being based almost exclusively upon the promise of continued French dominance. Similarly, the Viet Minh were able to exploit political unrest in Cambodia and Laos, establishing a united front with the two countries in 1950.[25] Lansdale noted in 1953 that "French paternalism was turning over the controls of self-rule too slowly and grudgingly to the Vietnamese to generate any enthusiasm among Vietnamese nationalists," who had little control over Vietnamese forces or the civilian administration.[26]

The French showed a marked reluctance to raise a national army in Vietnam. Although de Lattre was able after a struggle to coax Bao Dai into the rapid creation and expansion of a Vietnamese army, an initial target of an establishment of 115,000 men was not achieved until 1953. De Lattre himself supervised the formation of a cadre school and ordered each French unit in Vietnam to raise a second battalion from the local population. But this rapid expansion lost momentum under his successor, Salan, who distrusted both the Vietnamese army, which the Viet Minh were infiltrating, and its capabilities. Instead, French units were encouraged to recruit more Vietnamese into regular French units. For example, when the 2nd Battalion, 1st Parachute Light Infantry landed at Dien Bien Phu on November 20, 1953, nearly half their number was Vietnamese. The French were also reluctant to arm local militias, which could have freed the regulars from manning static defenses. There were moreover no policies designed to tempt deserters from the Viet Minh or to recruit captured guerrillas into pseudo gangs for deployment against their erstwhile colleagues.[27]

Some basic counterinsurgency lessons did emerge from the Indochina War. It was recognized, for example, that the guerrillas gained considerable strength from their support among the local population. Although the resettlement of the indigenous population was never adopted as a general policy in Vietnam, valuable experiments in this technique took place within defended zones in the border areas of Cambodia, notably in Svay Rieng in 1946 and in Kompong Chau in 1951. This deprived the Viet Minh of support and left these previously infiltrated areas in the control of the French. The aim was to deny food, shelter, and recruits to the Viet Minh, and some success was enjoyed. Some local tribesmen—principally from the T'ai mountains in the north—were organized, under French officers and NCOs, into *groupements de Commandos Mixtes Aéroportés* (GCMA), renamed as *Groupements Mixes d'Intervention* (GMI) in December 1953, for antiguerrilla operations in remote areas. These units, however, were generally distrusted and rarely operated with regular units. But although given little support or publicity, they demonstrated what could be achieved by employing antiguerrilla forces, capable of meeting the enemy on his own ground and with his own tactics. Mistakenly, the French felt unable to carry out similar schemes in Vietnam, owing to the difficulty and expense of implementation in a country whose densely populated arable land sharply limited the possibilities for creating new farming communities. These new methods contributed to the evolution of the new counterinsurgency doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire*, which the French were subsequently able to apply in Algeria.[28]

It became increasingly apparent between 1946 and 1954 that the tactics of pacification, employing the twin elements of static garrisons in fortified posts to intimidate the local population and mobile "flying columns" to crush any revolt, were no longer sufficient and were not designed to combat communist revolutionary warfare. Although *tache d'huile* had been applied successfully and extensively in North Africa, Equatorial and West Africa, Madagascar, and Indochina, its application after 1945 was not queried despite its intrinsic inadequacies. Prior to 1945, pacification had mostly been employed in circumstances that were highly favorable to the French against rebels who were divided by religious or tribal allegiance; were inadequately armed, equipped, and organized; and lacked either a sense of nationalism or a revolutionary communist organization. Pacification techniques proved effective notably in Indochina and Madagascar during the late nineteenth century and also in Morocco during the early twentieth century but proved to be ineffective in the changed circumstances from 1945 onward such as against the Viet Minh. In short, such successes were less easily achieved against a nationalist movement with a strong organization and widespread appeal. These deficiencies quickly became evident after the outbreak of hostilities in Indochina. The traditional French reliance on technology and firepower,

although occasionally an asset, too often worked against the French, who lacked the mobility to engage the elusive guerrillas. Pacification relied on tactical mobility, but this was never achieved in a decisive way because the French lacked enough numbers of aircraft or helicopters for the transportation of troops or supply by air on a large scale as would be common when American troops later served in Vietnam. As a result, during the Indochina War, the French had to depend upon mobile columns of half-tracks, tanks, and trucks, which having to move by road were vulnerable to ambush. In short, pacification was no longer a viable counterinsurgency strategy with which to suppress the new types of insurgency, which emerged in the aftermath of World War II and bore little similarity to previous colonial revolts. As the first European power to confront a communist revolution organized along Maoist lines, France displayed a number of crucial weaknesses in its counterinsurgency.[29]

In response, the French army developed a number of other techniques, based on the "lessons" of Indochina as analyzed through the prism of the counterrevolutionary theory known as *guerre révolutionnaire*, to overcome the insurgent threat. The defeat in Indochina had been a seminal experience, a trauma, which had a profound effect upon the French army, acting as a catalyst for the evolution of *guerre révolutionnaire*, which sought new ways of countering anticolonial insurrection to replace that of *tache d'huile*. This doctrine of a total war against revolutionary movements had its origins in the writings of an influential group of thinkers within the French officer corps, which confronted yet another defeat after 1940. They became obsessed with learning the lessons of the war in Indochina to win future revolutionary wars, already imminent elsewhere in the French Empire. Many of the younger officers who evolved this new doctrine had fought in Indochina and in some cases had been captured by the Viet Minh, learning at firsthand about communist insurgency and Maoist revolutionary methods to formulate a new counterinsurgency doctrine.[30]

General Lionel-Max Chassin commanded the French Air Force, Colonel Lacheroy held a staff position, General Nemo commanded a battalion, while some of the more prominent theorists, notably Hogard, Piorier, and Souyris, were comparatively junior officers having served as platoon commanders or intelligence, civil affairs, or propaganda officers. Engaged in an energetic, almost passionate, inquiry into enemy doctrine, particularly into the writings of Mao Tse-tung and Giap, these officers were more concerned with obtaining quick answers to urgent operational problems rather than with objective historical analysis. Uninterested in understanding the complex origins of the Indochina War, the theorists of *guerre révolutionnaire* tended to be rather superficial in their analysis. They stressed that Mao's writings provided a general theory of modern war, which in fact had not been his intention. More importantly, they emphasized that the army had been naïve in the ways of subversive war and, receiving

insufficient support from the government and people at home, had been beaten by a more fanatical and united opponent. The operational lessons derived from the study of the Indochina War combined with a deep dissatisfaction within the army concerning the social and political realities of contemporary France to provide the impetus to formulate a new, controversial doctrine, which was to have a far-reaching impact and influence on the conduct of counterinsurgency operations in Algeria.[31]

From 1954, French officers studied the campaigns in China and Indochina and the new political strategic implications of Mao's principles of revolutionary warfare on antiguerrilla warfare. At the core of *guerre révolutionnaire* was the belief that the army, without either domestic or international support, was the defender of the West and its values against communist revolution. It was believed that the Indochina War was the result of a worldwide conspiracy by dedicated communist revolutionaries to subvert the West and overthrow existing political structures using a unique mixture of psychological and military methods.[32] As Colonel Antoine Argoud, one of Massu's staff officers in Algeria, stated in 1960: "We want to halt the decadence of the West and the march of communism. That is our duty, the real duty of the army. That is why we must win in Algeria. Indo-China taught us to see the truth."[33]

Following traditions from the 1930s and from Vichy, the enemy was now seen as being Soviet communism, and many officers were convinced that they were defending Western civilization against this threat. In Algeria, this belief in a communist conspiracy would blind many French officers to the real causes of the conflict, which were Muslim discontent with political and economic inferiority.[34] Indeed, the FLN (*Front de Libération Nationale*) were often referred to as "Viets" even though communism had minimal influence over the FLN, which represented a nationalist movement. Nevertheless, the army tended to see the war in terms of an international conspiracy of the Left. General Raoul Salan represented the views of many officers when he declared that "I do not have to exonerate myself for having refused to allow Communism to be established an hour away from Marseilles."[35]

Having recognized and dissected the nature of the threat, the theorists of *guerre révolutionnaire* went on to evoke a doctrine of counterrevolution based on what they pinpointed as the inbuilt Achilles' heel of the Maoist model. This was identified as its vulnerability during the preliminary phases of the insurgency, when popular support had yet to be established; its dependence on a logistic base, often in an adjacent country; and its military weakness during the initial phases of the insurgency. Countermeasures were designed to exploit these factors by preventing or containing communist subversion, notably promoting education and reform, and closely monitoring the activities of the population. Above all, it was emphasized that, unlike the case in Indochina, the army should have the

complete support of the government, despite the unpopularity or repressive nature of its methods. In other words, France had to be ready to implement a politico-military counter-doctrine with an equal ideological determination to be able to defeat the revolutionary strategy of the communists. The French theorists of *guerre révolutionnaire* advocated the doctrine of fighting fire with fire as the only answer to the revolutionary warfare waged by Mao and Ho Chi Minh. This was a development of *tache d'huile*, rather than any radical departure, recognizing that the highly integrated and structured Viet Minh had employed a new combination of political, military, and psychological techniques to win over the population and subvert the French colonial authorities. According to the doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire*, the military campaign would be waged by both military and psychological means without restraint, as Total War.[36]

Although not probing the more fundamental motivation for subversion, the doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire* did provide soldiers with a helpful operational tool for studying revolutionary warfare. It was, however, a doctrine, which was rigid, almost dogmatic, in its ideas. It led eventually to a dangerous politicization of the army. The advocates of the new doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire* felt that it was the duty of the French government and people to support the army unconditionally to ensure that any future insurgency would be resisted by identical ideological vigor, and resolve also had serious political ramifications. The conclusion drawn from Indochina by many French officers was that the resources of the entire nation, and not simply the cadres of regular officers and NCOs, must be committed to the struggle. A total war against the revolutionary enemy had to be waged, and when the politicians clearly failed to appreciate this, the only solution was for the army to assume the responsibility for political decisions.[37]

Inevitably, endorsement of *guerre révolutionnaire* by the army was not instantaneous. From the start, the arrogance of some theorists was perceived as being unwarranted by both the more conservative French senior officers and the more liberal, often Gaullist, officers. In 1954, students faced criticism from their instructors at the Ecole de Guerre for allowing their judgment to be "deformed" by their service in Indochina. Two years later, an influential portion of the officer corps had succumbed to the unceasing propaganda and demands of the Algerian campaign, which was being waged more and more according to the principles and techniques of *guerre révolutionnaire*. For example, the *Centre d'Instruction de Pacification et de Contre-Guerrilla* (Centre for the Teaching of Pacification and Counter-Guerrilla) was set up in Algeria at Arzew (Oran Province) in March 1956 to inculcate French officers in the new doctrine. The believers within the officer corps were distrustful of skeptical fellow officers, who frequently considered the enthusiasts to be extremely arrogant. The brief era of ascendancy enjoyed by the doctrine had started.

But, in early 1961, one senior officer estimated that at most 20 percent of army officers wholly accepted the views of *guerre révolutionnaire*, as many accepted only the narrower, tactical theories of the doctrine, and either ignored or rejected its wider, political implications. Even fewer NCOs and privates were persuaded, as future events were to show. The Navy and Air Force remained largely unaffected by the doctrine.[38]

Nevertheless, defeat in Indochina was a bitter pill for the French army, increasing the officer corps' scornful distrust of French politicians. This was further exacerbated by the new counterinsurgency doctrine, *guerre révolutionnaire*, which led increasingly to a politicization of the army when the lessons of Indochina were applied by the French during the insurgency in Algeria between 1954 and 1962. For many soldiers, the humiliation of Indochina confirmed that traditional *esprit de corps* and patriotism were ineffective defenses against revolutionary *élan*, particularly if the government failed to either understand or resource the counterinsurgency campaign. The concept of limited war was unacceptable, and the government and nation had to furnish total support to the armed forces.[39] One officer who was quoted in the General Staff's postwar analysis noted that "If we were unable to effectively fight Communist propaganda, it is because we did not offer a positive ideology as an alternative to Communism from which would have come a doctrine and a faith."[40]

One lesson drawn from the experiences in Indochina by officers serving in Algeria was that the French army should not be allowed to suffer another ignoble defeat because of a lack of political and national will to overcome a modern insurgency.[41] The doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire* argued that if the politicians could not achieve the required ideological cohesion and unity of purpose between the army, the government, and the people, then the army had the right to impose it. As an article in *Verbe* argued, "the Army's concept of the common good was superior to that of the state."[42] Many officers who extolled the tenets of *guerre révolutionnaire* came increasingly to believe that the doctrine could not be realized satisfactorily in the multiparty, liberal France of the Fourth and Fifth Republics.[43] As early as 1958, Commandant Hogard contended that "it is time to realise that the democratic ideology has become powerless in the world today."[44] These assumptions reveal deep alienation from the métropole and, above all, a deep suspicion of politicians in mainland France, which had been exacerbated by the Suez Crisis and the ongoing squabbles with Paris over money and resources.[45]

For the theorists and adherents of *guerre révolutionnaire*, the war in Algeria was a crusade for the future of France itself. Algeria was not only to be rescued from communism and Pan-Arabism, but also France itself was to be revived from its inefficient and corrupt condition and restored as a disciplined, progressive world power. Implicit in the analysis of

revolutionary warfare was the conviction that any new insurgency would assist communists who would hoodwink the leaders of the nationalist movement. In reality, however, the FLN was not communist, although it was socialist and anti-imperialist and willing to accept aid from the Soviet bloc.[46]

Following defeat in Indochina, the army saw itself as engaged in a wider conflict against a worldwide revolution, which supported anticolonialism, non-Western nationalism, and communism and could only be defeated by a total commitment of all resources at the disposal of the nation itself. Total War demanded a total defeat of the enemy, and any negotiations, compromise, or limited goals would undermine the all-embracing war against the insidious enemy. A counterinsurgency campaign had therefore to be fought without restraint, allowing semi-legalized brutality, such as the deportation or internment of local-level communities, and the detention and torture of individuals. The crusading ideology of *guerre révolutionnaire* with its insistence on a total politico-military effort and the rejection of compromise had an unfortunate influence on the subsequent conduct of operations in Algeria. It led the army, increasingly frustrated by its isolation, to advocate policies that were unsustainable both politically and militarily. In such circumstances, *guerre révolutionnaire* led to disaster, plunging the army into the treacherous waters of open involvement in French domestic politics and ruining its reputation and effectiveness.[47]

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CHAPTER 6

The Malayan Emergency: British Counterinsurgency Phases and the Triumph of Geo-demographic Control, 1948–60

Karl Hack

TIMELINE

1948, June 16	Emergency declared in parts of the states of Johore[1] and Perak
1948, June 18	Emergency declared nationwide. Police direction of the military in aid of the civil power.
1948–49	Both sides struggle to arm and formulate policies.
1950, April	Lieutenant General Briggs made director of operations in a civil capacity to direct all operations. System of War Executive Committees established for Federation (FWEC), States (SWEC), and Districts (DWEC).
1950, June	"Briggs Plan" and systematic resettlement fully underway.
1951, October	Malayan Communist Party's (MCP) "October Resolutions" radically change insurgent tactics.
1951, October 6	High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney ambushed and killed.
1951, December	First municipal elections (Penang).
1952, February	Alliance formed from UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) and MCA (Malayan Chinese Association) to contest Kuala Lumpur municipal elections. General Sir Gerald Templer arrives as both director of operations and high commissioner, staying until April 1954.
1952–1954	Alliance sweeps municipal and state elections. Emergency incidents plummet in 1952 and then continue improving steadily.

1955, July	Alliance sweeps federal elections. Its leader, Tunku Abdul Rahman, becomes chief minister.
1955, September	Amnesty terms announced.
1955, December	Baling Peace Talks between Malayan ministers and MCP fail.
1956, January–February	London Constitutional Conference sets date for independence and agrees emergency direction to pass to Malayans in the interim.
1956, March	Emergency Operation Council (EOC) commences, chaired by Tunku Abdul Rahman to direct operations.
1957, August 31	Independence (*Merdeka*) but many British remain in key positions.
1957, October	Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA) allows continued British use of bases for "Commonwealth Strategic Reserve," and continuing Commonwealth assistance to the civil power in counterinsurgency.
1960, July 31	Formal end of emergency. Small Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) units remain at the border.

The Malayan Emergency officially lasted from mid-June 1948 until July 31, 1960, with small numbers of communist insurgents fighting on from the Malaysian-Thai border area afterward, some until a final peace agreement in December 1989. The campaign started with both sides ill-prepared. The communists had anticipated a conscious escalation from labor militancy (including killing "bad" employers and opposition unionists), to prepare the country for a full "people's war" over several months from March 1948. In their ideal world, the latter would have broken out in or after September 1948, against a background of increasing rural and worker support, preferably extending beyond their main Chinese support base to embrace more Malays and Indians.

The British colonial authorities, meanwhile, started in June 1948 with a police force of around 9,000, and a military of about 10 battalions (plus two local battalions from the Malay Regiment and 26 Royal Artillery Regiment deployed as infantry). Except for the Malay Regiment, the military had been intended to act mainly as a strategic reserve to project British power throughout the east. The diversion of this embryonic British-Gurkha strategic reserve to emergency duties—followed soon after by the arrival of British reinforcements—came as a severe disappointment. Throughout 1948–51, Whitehall would repeatedly demand to know when the tide in Malaya would be reversed, so that resources could be released. In 1948, meanwhile, neither the police nor the army were well prepared for counterinsurgency.[2]

The insurgents also suffered from early disorganization. They lost many men to early arrests, and more to police and army sweeps and cordon and search operations. Forced into the jungle months ahead of their ideal start date, they had to hurriedly move ex-wartime guerrillas,

unionists, and party workers into the cover of the jungle.[3] Starting with around 2,000–3,000 poorly organized men in mid-1948, they reached a peak estimated yearly average strength of 7,294 in 1951. This would fall to 5,765 in 1952 as resettlement of their rural supporters took its toll, and to 2,798 in 1955.[4]

By the latter date, the insurgents sought negotiations in the hope of ending the insurgency and returning to politics as decolonization accelerated. With negotiations in December 1955 failing, by independence on August 31, 1957 they were reduced to less than 1,800 members of the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), of whom only a few hundred were fighters. Most were by then located near the border or in southern Thailand, to which the MNLA command had retreated in 1952–53 while leaving behind clusters of fighters in the Malayan states of Perak, Negri Sembilan, and Johore. From 1957 to 1959, the remaining Commonwealth forces therefore concentrated on helping local forces in a few large operations, with the aim of eliminating those insurgents remaining in Malaya. Despite the slump in MNLA fortunes, and occasional surges in surrenders, the grim reality was that approximately 67 percent of insurgents "eliminated" were killed (see Table 6.1).

In short, the emergency spluttered into premature life in 1948, peaked in terms of security force casualties and insurgent numbers in 1951, saw dramatic falls in incidents in 1952 and continuing but slower paced improvement thereafter, but still demanded sustained pressure against pockets of insurgents as late as 1957–59. In 1958, the MNLA command on the border ordered a gradual rundown of most remaining forces, a process only partially reversed in 1962, following encouragement from Beijing. Given the official end of the emergency on July 31, 1960, emergency conditions were thereafter only used in specific areas, mostly near the Thai border. Despite occasional assassinations and flying columns in the 1970s, the insurgents became little more than a containable irritation.

Returning to the main part of the campaign, we need to conceptualize the insurgents as more than merely a group of fighters and the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) officials who directed them. The MNLA[5] fighters—about 80–90 percent Chinese plus a mix of Malays and Indians—were supported by far larger numbers of "Mass Organisation" (*Min Yuen*), in turn sustained by up to a million sympathizers—all this from a Malayan population that grew from around 5 million in 1948 to just over 6 million by 1957.[6]

Malaya's population was in turn split between Malays and similar groups (around 49 percent by 1947) who claimed special consideration as what later came to be called *bumiputra* (sons of the soil) and who slightly outnumbered Chinese (38 percent and around 1.9 million in 1947) and a smaller Indian community.[7] The Chinese were mostly first- to third-generation immigrant stock speaking a number of dialects.

Table 6.1

Casualties in the Malayan Emergency up to Independence, August 31, 1957

	Killed	Wounded	Captured	Surrendered	Missing	Eliminations	Total
Civilians	2,461	1,381			807		4,651
Security forces	1,851	2,526					4,377
Total of civilians and security forces	4,312	3,907			807		9,028
CT[1]	6,398 (67%)[3]	2,760	1,245 (13%)[3]	1,938 (20%)[3]		9,581[2]	12,341

Notes:
[1]In 1952, the government officially re-designated insurgents (formerly called bandits or communist bandits) as "communist terrorists" (CTs) and *Min Yuen* and other actively organized supporters as "Communist Terrorist Organisation" (CTO) members.
[2]CT eliminations are less than the CT total, as wounded might still be operational, and so not eliminated.
[3]Figures in brackets are approximate percentages of CT eliminations (that is, excluding wounded) due to kills, captures, and surrenders.

Source: Compiled and tabulated from DOO Report 1957, p. 6, paras 17–18.

The Indians likewise were mostly of immigrant stock, attracted by jobs on Malaya's plantations and in shops and offices. On the one hand, the mass of Chinese included many low-paid plantation and mine workers; on the other, wealthy *towkays* (powerful businessmen often also leading traditional associations), small businessmen, shopkeepers and traders, and an English-educated section. These patterns within the Chinese community would prove vital in the campaign that followed, providing significant groups who, given the right conditions, might be willing to oppose communism.[8]

The geographic canvas on which the campaign was played out was a long stretch of land about the size of England, jutting southward from the Southeast Asian land mass toward the Indonesian archipelago. This was bisected by an expansive "main range" of jungle-covered mountain and forest running down the middle of the country, from which communist-controlled insurgents had fought the Japanese during World War II. That conflict, which had seen British-controlled officers of Force 136 (Special Operation Executive) sent from India and Ceylon to help train the anti-Japanese guerrillas from 1943, made the communist-controlled anti-Japanese guerrillas heroes to many Chinese.

At first when things became tough after 1948, villagers and guerrillas could recall that anti-Japanese resistance had survived nearly four years of occupation, during which the Japanese had at times massacred villages in retaliation for insurgent-inspired incidents. Surely they would also find a way to defeat British sweeps and (from 1950) resettlement. They could also look toward the communist's rising postwar power, and then dominance, in mainland China. The declaration of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949, British recognition of it in January 1950, and the Korean War, all suggested that communism might be history's winning side and that Britain might be forced to withdraw forces from Malaya, as they had from Palestine in 1948.

With many Chinese in Malaya still imagining Southeast Asia as the "Nanyang" (South Seas—in other words, south of China), the idea that communism might roll southward through Indochina and Thailand to Malaya seemed anything but far-fetched as late as 1951. In this respect, it is important to remember that the Chinese were also split between those who still felt themselves Chinese sojourning overseas and the increasing number who recognized themselves as "Malayan" Chinese, as having put down tropical roots. Many of the anti-Japanese communist-led guerrillas of the war years had started out primarily as anti-Japanese, pro-China patriots. Some Chinese had even left Malaya to assist Kuomintang (Guomindang) forces in China. But Chinese fighters in Malaya itself became more and more Malayan minded as they and their comrades shed their blood in Malaya's jungles and plantations and as captured comrades were tortured and died in the custody of the Japanese *Kempeitei* (secret police).[9]

The edge of Malaya's jungle, where the anti-Japanese forces hid during the Japanese occupation, eased into *lallang* (long grasses and undergrowth at the jungle edge), then into smallholdings, rubber plantations, and tin mines, and finally into more heavily populated coastal strips. Moreover, the jungle edge itself was peppered by Chinese smallholdings, some legally owned and many more occupied illegally by Chinese "squatter" farmers. The latter housed up to half a million Chinese who had fled interwar underemployment, unemployment, and harsh labor conditions or who had settled there during the war for fear of Japanese massacres and oppression and to avoid increasing hunger.

The main concentration of towns and villages, however, lay on the plains, away from the mountains and jungle, which covered the interior two-thirds of the country. The western strip of coast was the more highly developed and urbanized, with good infrastructure and a higher Chinese percentage. The eastern strip was more sparsely populated, more Malay dominated, and relatively underdeveloped.

As in so many other insurgencies—whether anticolonial or postcolonial—the conflict would be characterized as much by miniature "civil wars" between and within individual ethnic and intra-ethnic groups about how to shape the country (as "nationalist" or "communist," as truly multiracial "Malayan" or as "Malay dominated") as about opposing the government. Finding and working with the grain of local society, and making the compromises necessary to facilitate entrenched anticommunist Asians who would be willing to work with the government, would be crucial to success. For instance, who among the Chinese would be willing to stand up against communism—at the risk of themselves and their families being killed—and for what interests, ideals, and concessions?[10] This need to court key local partners would mean compromising early British visions of transition to a more pure Westminster-style democracy founded on issue-based rather than ethnic identity-based parties. In particular, that would come to mean the ethnically based UMNO (United Malays National Organisation, founded 1946) and Malayan Chinese Association (MCA, founded initially as a social welfare organization, in 1949), the latter run by traditional and business Chinese leaders.

This Malayan mosaic of mountain and plain, and of diverse linguistic and cultural communities, was also subdivided administratively. The "Federation of Malaya" (or more properly translated, "Federation of Malay Lands") was divided into nine sovereign Malay states and the two "settlements" of Penang and Malacca. The federation was a classic case of a British imperial territory, which was not technically a formal "colony." The British had made it one briefly—in the Malayan Union of 1946–48—but then backtracked due to fear they would permanently lose majority Malay support following volatile mass rallies and the foundation of the UMNO. The federation instituted on February 1, 1948, thus restored

the sovereignty of the Malay sultans in each of their nine states (each with their own Malay *Menteri Besar* or first minister), with an ultimate power of veto in sensitive areas such as land policy, and where Malay protection was concerned. Though it retained the Malayan Union's innovations of a strong central executive and central legislature—both with a large official (British) majority, there was thus a delicate balance of power and influence in the federation. The Malays insisted that the British return to the spirit of the original agreements made in and after 1874, by which each of the nine Malay sultans had remained sovereign, but accepted a British resident or adviser whose "advice" was to be "asked and acted upon" in all matters excepting Malay custom (*adat*) and religion. They also insisted that citizenship rules be framed in a way that included fewer Chinese than earlier British plans of 1946 had envisaged.[11]

Indeed, the retreat from the union—and from that earlier promise of more generous citizenship extension for non-Malays—was one of the reasons the MCP concluded that further constitutional politics was futile.[12] As already noted, the MCP had cooperated with the British in wartime anti-Japanese activities. After the war, it emerged as an open party. In 1946–47, the MCP pursued "united front" policies, whereby it collaborated with other organizations to support laborers, demand faster moves to elections, and proposed a forward-looking "People's Constitution" that envisaged far-reaching democratic and labor rights.

An additional reason for the MCP losing confidence in peaceful campaigning was British repression of labor organization, such as banishing key labor and communist leaders, using trespass laws to keep organizers off rubber plantations, and police interventions in labor disputes that left some strikers dead in 1947.[13] The MCP secretary general who had supported a postwar united front and constitutional policy—Lai Teck—also disappeared with party funds in early 1947. Lai Teck, who had assumed heroic status for his apparent wartime bravado, was exposed as a triple agent who had betrayed comrades to the prewar and postwar British and the wartime Japanese. With postwar violence also ebbing away over time (violent crime was falling from 1947 into early 1948, until the communists changed their policy), and new labor laws due in June 1948 likely to limit communist influence in unions (most federations of unions were to be banned and union officials restricted to *bona fide* members of each industry without serious criminal convictions), the communists were in a bind.[14]

All this meant that by February 1, 1948, the day the new federation was inaugurated, the party's new leaders felt that they had little alternative but to resort to increased "defensive" violence. There was some opposition within the leadership, because the party had been weakened by Lai Teck's disappearance and had not yet gathered enough non-Chinese mass support. But simultaneous changes in international

communist policy, toward ending united fronts in and beyond Central and Eastern Europe and toward armed insurrection elsewhere, bolstered militancy. British propaganda would later present the MCP as following Comintern orders, but the truth was that local and international forces converged to massively overdetermine revolt.[15]

MCP meetings in March and May 1948 decided to prepare for full revolutionary warfare by late 1948 by first targeting "bad" employers and those opposing communist labor policy. It was the resultant escalation in attacks and murders—culminating in five murders on the single day of June 16, 1948 (three Europeans plantation managers and two Chinese), which caused the British to declare a local emergency in the states of Perak and Johore. As such, the murders were part of a concerted policy, but their short-term result was neither anticipated nor desired by the MCP.

The British, meanwhile, had not detected any communist plot for revolution on a particular date, precisely because the communist "plan" was for gradual escalation, with the precise timing for full warfare held over for decision later in 1948. The "myth" of an easy chance to spot a definite plan and act earlier may suit intelligence communities' desires to point to "lessons" (notably the self-serving one that more intelligence resources are always vital), but this does not fit the facts.[16] Almost by definition the launch of a major insurgency is likely to be flavored by a severe lack of good penetration of an insurgent organization. This makes the central requirement the need to understand how to rapidly transform and scale up intelligence resources. In addition, any premature declaration of emergency powers and resort to mass arrest could remove the chance to observe and further penetrate a movement just as it is realized that that is urgent, by forcing more of its members underground quickly. Notwithstanding these structural limitations, the postwar pan-Malayan "Malayan Security Service" (MSS) was soon disbanded, with intelligence gathering returning to a Special Branch (SB) operating out of Malaya's Police Criminal Investigation Division (CID). This ensured that the people gathering intelligence were organically linked to the operational police who had widest access to the public and information. By contrast, the MSS had been a pan-Malaya and Singapore organization focused on political intelligence and operationally detached from the police.[17]

Despite the British lack of the sort of evidence they needed for earlier action, the rising level of violence stemming from the communist decisions of March and May 1948 forced a harassed high commissioner to act. Sir Edward Gent declared an emergency at local and then national level between June 16 (parts of the two states of Perak and Johore) and 18 (nationwide, effective June 20). Under a barrage of press and planter criticism for the slowness of this resort to emergency, he was recalled to Britain for consultations, where his plane crashed on landing,

killing him. With angry British planters and frightened anticommunist Chinese now backed by the press, the government not only arrested around a thousand suspect Chinese and Malay left-wing nationalists on July 20 but finally outlawed the MCP as a political party in July.

It would be September 1948 before a new high commissioner took over. Sir Henry Gurney, who had been the last British chief secretary in Palestine, flew over to join General Boucher (GOC Malaya). In the same month, ex-Palestine Inspector General of Police Colonel W. Nichol Gray also arrived as commissioner of police, followed by around 500 police sergeants, mainly recruited from British Army NCOs and from Palestine. With the police directing the campaign, very few Chinese in the detective branch of the police, and faced by insurgent groups of up to a hundred (and exceptionally the low hundreds), it is not surprising that the underresourced security forces resorted to large sweeps, cordon and search, hooded informers or informers peering through slits on vehicles, and other methods reminiscent of Palestine and older colonial conflicts.

The use of the term *emergency* to cover these actions was an obvious one. The power for governors to issue a proclamation giving them control of property and persons and the use of courts martial for the latter had been established by Orders-in-Council of 1896 (for select fortresses) and 1916 (for all colonies). A March 1939 Emergency Powers (Colonial Defense) Order-in-Council had updated and extended these powers, envisaging their possible use in the general war that seemed to be approaching. The 1939 Emergency Powers Order-in-Council would be the model used in many postwar counterinsurgencies, whereby a governor or equivalent could after declaring an emergency make such regulations as he or she deemed necessary or expedient for public safety and defense. This is what the high commissioner for Malaya did in the Emergency Regulations Ordinance of July 1948.[18]

Such emergency rule was a useful device for retaining civil control and the appearance of the rule of law, while allowing the executive to issue emergency regulations (ERs), which suspended *habeas corpus* for discrete circumstances and needs (for instance, allowing detention without trial in Malaya). It could be used to give the army and police expanded powers of search and arrest, without burdening the army with the effort and odium of undertaking civil administration. From mid-1948, Malaya's ERs (issued by the high commissioner in council) proliferated, extending to a national identity card scheme, individual and group deportation of suspected noncitizens, and (especially from 1950) a raft of powers to control residence and movement of food and people. In short, emergency powers preserved the existing form of civil control and liberties and the rule of law, while providing in reality for a targeted—but in many ways pervasive—suspension of liberties. They created *a quasi-legal reality* within which the military and police exercised considerable powers and

discretion. They also allowed for extreme penalties, for instance from June 1950 extorting food for insurgents (as opposed to merely giving food) could attract the death penalty. Such draconian potential penalties gave added reason for those detained to cooperate, in the hope of being spared the worst. That maximizing of the gap between potential penalties for resistance, and yet rewards and assistance if helpful, was to continue to color the British approach to ERs in Malaya.[19]

The high commissioner of the federation thus retained control in Malaya, delegating the direction of the campaign against "bandits" or communist bandits—as the government initially designated their enemy—to the commissioner of police. The army, meanwhile, was called to assist the civil power, fortified in 1948 by the arrival of fresh units, such as the 2nd Battalion, the Scots Guards.

CAMPAIGN "PHASES" AND APPROACHES

It should already be obvious that the early period of the emergency was characterized by inadequate preparation and intelligence on both sides, and on the British side by a use of increasingly far-reaching emergency powers, and importation of British personnel with experience in Palestine and to some extent Palestinian methods and lessons. Sometimes attempts to avoid the mistakes of the last conflict created the mistakes of the next, as when Colonel Gray initially limited the use of armored cars for his police, in the hope of avoiding their isolation from the population (as he believed had happened in Palestine), and over-aggression.[20] Until reversed, this made the police desperately vulnerable in Malaya's jungle-fringed *ulu* (up-river or up-country) roads, even as planters were receiving armor for their cars and trucks, in addition to special constables to protect their isolated bungalows.

Such early characteristics did not, however, continue unchanged. Among the most important changes would be the easing of the early "approach to counter terror," with its large sweeps, and mass detention and large-scale deportation and intimidation of noncitizen Chinese.[21] That "counter-terror" was transformed, notably from 1950, into a much more controlled and increasingly better calibrated mix of "carrot and stick." Such dramatic changes in the overall feel and tone of the campaign highlight the degree to which it is necessary to carefully differentiate between different periods. By 1952, the highest of the imported Palestine-experienced British personnel (Gurney and Gray) would be gone, and the sergeants absorbed as local police lieutenants. The approach to the rural Chinese population would be radically changed, too, from attempting to intimidate them into cooperation in 1948–49 or else just move on or deport supposed recalcitrants, to

providing coercive but also protective resettlement. This contrast should serve as a warning against any attempt to stereotype something as complex and shifting as an insurgency using one model for an entire campaign.

Yet that is what seems to have happened in British counterinsurgency historiography, in the period from approximately 2007 to 2014. Hence, for instance, David French's emphasis in 2012–2013 on the British winning only where they "intimidated" the population more than the enemy works better for some periods in Malaya than for others, notwithstanding his simultaneous acknowledgment of the high importance of protecting the population. On October 15, 2013, Radio 4's *Terror through Time* series broadcast an interview in which French argued that the British had won counterinsurgencies only where they had managed to intimidate the population more than the insurgents. This echoed the message of his *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945–1967* that "On balance where they won they did so by being nasty, not nice, to the people."[22]

French's statement should be seen as sitting at the high-water mark of a tide of works rightly determined to correct the previous overemphasis on "winning hearts and minds" and "minimum force" as the core characteristics of a British way of counterinsurgency.[23] For Malaya, the classic statement of this argument was Richard Stubbs's *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare of 1989*, which had argued that an increase in positive measures after 1952 (notably elections at all levels, and improved facilities and protection for New Villages) had been necessary and key to turning round the emergency. According to him, the more purely coercive approach employed up to 1951 had instead produced mere "stalemate." Such works undoubtedly overestimated the impact of such positive measures at the stage at which the emergency started turning (which was also earlier than Stubbs estimated and stretched across 1950–52).[24] Given high-profile high court cases from 2011–13 concerning British abuses in Malaya and Kenya, and the associated release in 2012–13 of thousands of colonial files kept secret by the Foreign Office, the more recent tendency has been toward accurately documenting abuses of prisoners and detainees, use of illegal force, and examples of collective punishment.[25] It has consequently tended toward emphasizing the place of abuses such as widespread torture of Kenyan detainees in what are characterized as wider British counter-terror and intimidation.[26] This tide has, therefore, now gone so far as to claim that, though the British did have notions of exercising "minimum force" in limited contexts, British forces also employed ideas closer to sufficient force and even "exemplary force," which "targeted whole populations in order to punish insurgents, and to warn others not to support the rebellion"—this being, "by its nature indiscriminate and terrorising."[27]

As we shall see, however, such a characterization of British policy fits some periods better than others. It is most adequate for Malaya for the

1948–49 period of counter-terror, a period that garnered distinctly mixed results. For the following, transformative 1950–52 period, the British changed from the earlier, more heavily enemy-centric and "intimidation" or "counter-terror" approach, toward something closer to protective coercion or geo-demographic control. By geo-demographic control, it meant an approach that aims to integrate both enemy-centric and population-centric methods *around a core of controlling the critical contested population and space*.

This geo-demographic control (controlling people and space in tandem) set the scene. But it was not purely "population-centric" in the limited sense of concentrating on mainly positive measures aimed at the contested population—certainly not to the extent of underplaying enemy-centric and more coercive measures. Quite the reverse, from 1950 the Malayan campaign found a way of integrating enemy-centric patrols with operations targeted on clusters of New Villages and their surrounding area, with the ultimate aim of breaking particular MCP committees. The latter operations blended "lots of stick and lots of carrot"—often very tight controls but also clear inducements—rather than being merely coercive or mainly about "winning hearts and minds." To oppose these approaches would, for Malaya after 1950, create a false dichotomy.[28]

This blended approach meant that an individual army patrol might be laying ambushes or inserted deep in the jungle for aggressive patrols. The army's main roles remained military and enemy-focused in themselves. But this did not mean that they were detached from population-centric measures: quite the reverse. On average it might take 1,000 hours of patrolling to encounter an insurgent, 300 to carry out an ambush, or longer if there was no information to act on. So tying these activities to good intelligence was vital to increase contacts and kill rates.[29] This need for quality information if anything intensified as the campaign turned against the insurgents. By 1953–54, insurgents had retreated deeper into the jungle and become much more selective in their attacks. This made achieving contacts increasingly difficult and thus gaining information about local insurgent movements more vital. It also made gaining more kills per contact even more important. Consequently, *Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*, the counterinsurgency manual first published in 1952, emphasized not only the vital importance of good intelligence, but also training to improve marksmanship, selecting the man who was the best shot from a patrol to open ambushes, and matching best ambush layouts for different terrains. By contrast, close protection of New Villages and supervision of checks at their gates was increasingly turned over to Home Guard and police.[30] The army's role was thus mainly kinetic, patrolling, and ambushing, but most military actions after 1950 were deeply embedded in a broader approach.

From 1950, the army's military actions tended to contribute either to maintaining the "framework," which is providing security around a specific area, or to the mounting of operations that blended enemy-centric actions (fighting) with nearby population-centric actions by the police and civil authorities (New Village control and surveillance, increasing protection, increasing amenities, increasingly tight controls including over food, and also increased identification and meeting of local needs). In the latter case, the army's actions were carefully coordinated through the nexus of Malaya's post-1950 War Executive Committee (WEC) system, to create a tightening noose around a particular insurgent committee or leaders. If necessary, ad hoc WECs were created across normal civilian boundaries, to match the operational area to the communist committee's area of operations.

Such operations targeted the one or more New Villages that supplied a particular MNLA committee and were also seen as an essential source of increasing "live" intelligence (intelligence of future MNLA movements or intentions), for instance by turning MNLA suppliers in the villages. That live intelligence was in turn seen as the surest way to rendering the army's patrols and ambushes successful, as contacts declined after 1953.[31] Purely military action was by contrast considered much less likely to create the necessary live intelligence. Even if it did and succeeded on its own terms, without the wider geo-demographic control and targeting of a communist committee and its civilian support network, a detached army success would probably not have the same effect of destroying the insurgent ability to regenerate. During the critical 1950–52 period, furthermore, some of the most extremely coercive and "terrorizing" policies (such as removal of squatters without resettlement) and especially stretching or breaking of the law (the shooting of fleeing villagers or killing of the innocent) were reined in.[32] Arguably, that reining in also helped to reduce the "push" factor that encouraged people to flee to the insurgents, or to support them out of anger or sympathy.

By contrast, overemphasis on large police-army sweeps and on intimidation in 1948–49, while vital in breaking up large enemy units, actually increased the size of enemy units and support, and their replacement rates.[33]

Thus, while the correction of a post-1980s myth about the possibility of "nice," "winning hearts and minds" counterinsurgency has been timely, there is a danger that this can overshoot and, in so doing, fail to accurately identify the real blend of policies and techniques that existed in "winning" or turnaround phases of rural counterinsurgencies. It may also underestimate the tendency to at least try and reduce the most undiscriminating and strictly punitive elements during Malaya's most transformative phase.

Thus, the Malayan example detailed later suggests that, when we integrate the periodization of campaigns into our analysis, we may get a more subtle understanding of what was happening, and why, in distinct counterinsurgency phases. It also suggests that such analysis by campaign phase can help to avoid the tendency to mistake mere tactics and techniques for the overall strategic approach or policy blend in each period. Hence, enemy-centric operations, population-centric operations, intimidation, attempts to "win hearts and minds," and other tactics all existed in most periods and blends. What changed was their detail, their relative weight in the overall recipe or menu, and the machinery and logic by which they were coordinated.

It is by the understanding of those differing blends, and differing logics and machineries for coordinating diverse tactics, that we can comprehend the overall "strategy" or characteristics of very different campaign phases. The additional implication is that a similar approach, stressing differences between phases, and trying to identify the precise blend of policies and logic of operation in each, might need to be applied more rigorously to other counterinsurgencies.

How, then, does this chapter periodize the Malayan emergency and justify that periodization? Any periodization is of necessity a model, a simplification, or a heuristic model designed to aid learning and understanding. It is something that seeks to capture the essence of more complex changes over time, with periods inevitably overlapping more than any model might at first suggest. That said, the following can serve as a periodization for the purposes of this chapter and for the purposes of comparative analysis:

1. Terror and Counter-Terror (1948–49)
2. Population Control, Geo-demographic Control, and "Clear and Hold" (1950–52)
3. Optimization (1952–54)[34]
4. Mopping Up, Peacemaking, and Normalization (1955–60)

In using this periodization, it is vital always to keep in mind its limitations. For instance, it would be nonsense to think that all security force abuses (or group arrests and deportations) stopped dead by the end of 1949 or that all resettlement areas were fully efficient by 1952. Each period is a way of expressing the overall nature and weight of campaigning, rather than something absolute. Hence, for instance, the vast majority of deportations were made before June 1950, but a significant number were made as late as 1952, before the practice began a rapid decline. In addition, campaigns may *exhibit quite different characteristics or stages of operation at the same point in time in different geographical areas*, according to need.[35] Hence, as late as 1955–60 (coinciding with Phase 4 of earlier transition), one could find one area that might have been declared "white"

(largely free of insurgency and with most emergency restrictions lifted) since 1953, while another area was "jet black" and as such subjected to combined, intensifying police-army operations and heightened food and other restrictions to try and break the nearby insurgent leadership. Overall, however, Phase 4 was a period when a long, slow move toward local political and military control and toward removing emergency restrictions in more and more areas was the dominant pattern.

The earlier periodization therefore does help to identify and aid understanding of key changes in *emphasis* and in the overall qualitative feel of the campaign. It also develops rather than contradicts the director of operations' (DOO) 1957 assessment of how the campaign had developed up to independence, given in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2.

Director of Operations' Campaign Narrative

Narrative of the Campaign
24. The fluctuations of fortune . . . fell roughly into four periods:
(a) June 1948–October 1949. The Communist attempt to seize power by violence and revolution was held and the CTs [Communist Terrorists, a term introduced in 1952] withdrew into the jungle to reorganise for a prolonged war.
(b) October 1949–August 1951. The CTs took the offensive to seize power by violence and revolution all over Asia. A Director of Operations (Sir Harold Briggs) was appointed to coordinate civil and military measures [in April 1950], both of which were showing some serious weaknesses. By 1951 violence had reached its peak, but eliminations also began to increase as SF methods improved.
(c) August 1951–July 1954. The Briggs Plan matured, bringing the dispersed Chinese population under control, and the CTs became less aggressive in the face of large numbers of eliminations. In February 1952, General (now Field Marshal) Sir Gerald Templer, was appointed as High Commissioner and Director of Operations with full power over all civil and military resources. The CTs lost over half their strength and SF [security force] and Civilian casualties declined to less than one seventh of the 1951 peak. The back of the revolt was broken.
(d) July 1954–August 1957. The crisis being over, the posts of High Commissioner and Director of Operations were again separated. CT strength dwindled steadily, as did incidents, contacts and casualties on both sides. Malayan political leaders gradually took over control in preparation for independence.

Source: Adapted from DOO Report on the Malayan Emergency up to 31 August 1957, dated September 1957, as found in The National Archives (TNA), Air 20/10377, as published in C.C. Chin and Karl Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), p. 48.

What follows is a summary of each of the main campaign phases and their defining characteristics, combined with some explanation for the transition between phases.

TERROR AND COUNTER-TERROR (1948–49)

In this period, the insurgents attempted to seize bases in rural districts and launched large operations and ambushes utilizing up to a few hundred men. At peak strength, where they tried to establish liberated zones in outlying areas, they employed up to 500 men in a single operation.

In terms of control, the army were tasked with aiding the civil power, with the police coordinating operations. But with an initial force of around 9,000 police for a large country with variable infrastructure—and often lacking radios and adequate transport—the police were often unable to provide adequate guidance. In addition, insurgents enjoyed strong support and easy access to Chinese agricultural settlements on the jungle fringe. A police-army patrol might enter a village on one day, with an insurgent unit arriving to collect food, visit relatives, and even celebrate festivals soon after. Chinese villages on the jungle fringe thus constituted not so much a "no man's land" as an "every man's land" subject to contested control, with patrols facing both extreme uncertainty and the dilemma of how to extract information from villagers who would most likely also have to answer to guerrilla fighters.

The MCP did not, however, have things all its own way. It tried and failed to establish a few rural bases, accompanied by a few daring headline-grabbing seizures of populated areas. In July 1948, guerrillas seized and briefly held the northeastern hill town of Gua Musang. This lay deep in the mountains and jungles, along the branch railway line to the northeast. It had a long-established Chinese population and had been a major support center for the wartime anti-Japanese resistance. Despite this, troops were brought to bear within days, and the insurgents were soon battered out by regular troops supported by Spitfires.[36] Elsewhere, the insurgents seized Malaya's only coal mining town, Batu Arang on the west coast not far north of Kuala Lumpur, on July 13. They corralled hostages, before retreating later in the day to nearby hills. On July 30, 26 Field Artillery and local police wreaked vengeance, detraining separately from the railway line east of Batu Arang, and converging at a sharp pace, shooting anything seemingly threatening as they moved in a pincer movement against what they believed were camps and communist-supporting villages. More than 20 were killed without a shot being fired in return, though a few revolvers were allegedly discovered. Twice as many arrests were made, and villagers' huts were burned down afterward.[37] The identification of an area as "hostile," though in effect it

was probably an "everyman's land" of civilians open to either side to move through, had had deadly effects near Batu Arang.

Secretary General Chin Peng's hopes were highest in these first hectic, semi-organized months, from late 1948 to Chinese New Year 1949, with dreams of establishing rural bases from which they could drive government forces, before expanding. Both the examples given here were areas that had supported wartime anti-Japanese guerrillas. Batu Arang's workers had held pitched battles with the police over strikes as early as 1937. Both, however, also showed how difficult establishing any real population base would be. Few populated areas—as opposed to jungle depths—were more than a few hours from a military concentration. Even the relatively isolated railway town of Gua Musang was soon recaptured, and Batu Arang was only held for hours. Deep jungle areas could be held for a time, but what the insurgents needed were locations near to concentrations of population.[38]

That initial period of communist terror (notably through killing "collaborators") and government counter-terror gradually pushed the communists to switch their tactics. By 1949, they were shifting emphasis toward economic sabotage and harassing of security forces by ambushes, and relying on friendly Chinese villages on the jungle fringe for information and logistics. Early on these villages formed the sort of "every man's land" noted earlier, with both the communists easily wandering in to visit relatives and collect food, and in their absence security forces sweeping through making arrests or, where communist support was suspected, burning the huts of alleged supporters.

The government had had little contact with these "squatters," and minimal intelligence on them. As a result the army sometimes acted on its own initiative in 1948–49. In addition, though technically they were only permitted to shoot to kill if they reasonably suspected people were armed, or were with people who were armed, units were told by HQ Malaya instructions of August 14, 1948, to shoot if in doubt about those facts. These instructions, despite noting the aforementioned restrictions, emphasized the necessity of shooting wherever it was believed armed people might escape, to still shoot if in doubt, and that—purportedly—a "recent" patrol had not shot, only to find themselves subject to attack soon afterward. In a situation where information from the police might be vague, the suggested responsibility to shoot when in doubt had terrible implications. This was particularly the case in and around the many jungle fringe villages that were believed to be frequented by bandits, or worse still where villagers were believed to have given the "bandits" food.[39]

There seem to have been regular instances of one or a few people dying in such circumstances.[40] More spectacularly, 24 unarmed male Chinese rubber tappers suspected of providing food to insurgents—including

elderly men—were shot in one incident by Scots Guardsmen, at Batang Kali on December 11–12, 1948. More research is needed into what circumstances made such events more likely, and what if anything reduced the chances and the severity of such failures. The initial impression is that the "every man's land" nature of the terrain close to the jungle's edge was a major contributor, with army orders to shoot people suspected of being armed, or people fleeing who were suspected of being armed even if "in doubt," a major contributory factor. How far the administration's and Sir Henry Gurney's declared attitude contributed—that people had a responsibility to separate themselves from guerrillas—and that rural Chinese would by nature respond to whoever looked stronger, is not clear.[41] In summary, since security forces in 1948–49 viewed rural Chinese villages as occupying contested and possibly hostile space, they sometimes went into that space briefed to be prepared to kill, and certainly to be willing to consider killing anyone who might be judged as "escaping" while possibly armed.

The shooting down of the 24 unarmed Chinese villagers in the single incident at Batang Kali of December 11–12 was initially reported as insurgents killed, and as one of the largest successes of the campaign thus far. Then it was reported as villagers shot during a pre-concerted attempt to "escape"; finally, the attorney general quelled growing complaints and doubts by "investigating." In reality, he interviewed the soldiers involved and their commanders but declined to interview surviving villagers, claiming the self-evidently unreasonable justification that they probably would not speak and that even if they did, they would be liable to lie. It nevertheless quickly became clear that the villagers, having been detained and questioned in their *kongsi* house overnight, including with mock executions, had been separated into men and women and were known to have been unarmed. In January 1949, a new regulation, ER 27A, was rushed in, which legalized killing escaping prisoners even if unarmed, providing a warning was first given and ignored. It thus retrospectively legalized what the soldiers had eventually claimed had happened at Batang Kali, though in 1969–70 several of them would make sworn statements that the villagers had not been running and that they believed it had been cold-blooded murder.[42] Batang Kali and, to a lesser extent, Batu Arang were probably exceptional in scale, but at another level typified a real and widespread danger for civilians in disputed zones.[43]

The downside of army and police indiscipline was that counterterror—as experienced by many rural Chinese—increased insurgent recruiting. Take, for instance, the letter sent by someone using the name "Tan Chin Siong" to MCA President Tan Cheng Lock. Chin Siong's letter was received in May 1950, just after Briggs arrived as DOO in April, and when only around 18,500 rural residents had been properly resettled as

opposed to dispersed or deported.[44] "Now you may call me a terrorist," he wrote, "or you may call me a refugee." He had fled arrest in 1948 and worked as a subscription collector. Why had numbers for the MNLA unit he supported ballooned? In 1948, it comprised 40 of very limited quality. Government arrests swelled "refugees," until by 1949 it was 150. A year later, it was 180 and better prepared and motivated. He nevertheless claimed that only 10 percent were high-caliber leaders, 20 percent veterans of wartime anti-Japanese forces, and 70 percent "refugees," continuing that, "It could be said that the Government helped the Malayan Communists to recruit." Police demands for coffee money alienated people, he could obtain a communist an identity card by bribing special constables, and police sometimes shot people after disputes. But the main recruiter was the creation of "heartache" by forcing people to "evacuate" homes and crops, youth affected by this being the most ardent fighters. A government that knew only how to use force was stoking the fires: "The slogan that since death is everywhere they should fight against the Government to the end is common throughout the rank and file."[45]

Counter-terror was clearly an ambivalent policy. Even as it swelled insurgent numbers, Security Force (SF) sweeps, combined with large-scale detention (a peak of 11,000 were detained at any one time), and deportation of noncitizen Chinese (around 10,000 in the peak year of 1949, often under ER17D detained and deported as a group, without appeal), prevented the insurgents from establishing any main bases, broke them down into smaller units in late 1948–49, and provided base-level intelligence.

Indeed, SF action was successful enough to persuade the communists to change their tactics. By mid-1949, incidents slumped as the insurgents realized they could no longer simply wander into villages to gather supplies, nor keep large bases near populated areas, and that they needed to try and lessen the impact on villagers. They therefore stressed reorganization of their supply system from April to October 1949.[46] The consequent sharp decline in incidents in 1949 seemed to the British like a possible turning point and raised hopes of an early release of forces. The reality was somewhat different.

The insurgents' initial hopes of setting up liberated areas for expansion had indeed been disappointed. Their largest units had been broken down, and their communications with villagers made less easy. The rapid raising of a part-time police special constabulary and its posting to plantations and mines, however ill-trained, had kept the effects of sabotage within sustainable limits and stopped European rubber plantation managers from leaving en masse. But overall numbers of insurgents, and supporters, increased throughout 1948–50. We thus have the classic situation of SFs "winning" the numbers and body count game where combatants are concerned, but losing the numbers game where insurgent support and

replenishment was concerned, and also creating a ready supply of "accidental" new guerrillas: people fleeing arrest, angered by the death of their relatives, or bitter at the destruction of their huts and crops.[47]

The insurgents were, however, forced to adapt, and now concentrated on reorganizing their MNLA (formally taking that name in February 1949, as opposed to various names including the words *anti-British*, *People's*, or *National*), and the *Min Yuen*. The latter were reorganized into a cell structure better able to support MNLA despite SF sweeps, and despite greater SF presence near Chinese populated areas that had matured in the six months from September 1948. All this reorganization meant much reduced MNLA activity. It therefore seemed to the government—reading its weekly situation reports in early to mid-1949—that it had weathered the storm, when all it had really done was ride the first wave.

Once reorganized, the MNLA increased the number of types of operations from October 1949 into early 1950—including slashing of rubber trees, destroying trains and buses, ambushes, and even slightly larger attacks on police posts—creating a sense of crisis as the government realized it had previously been lulled into a false sense of optimism. Incidents reached 500 a month and SF and civilian deaths 200 a month during 1951.[48] In addition, though government pressure on rural Chinese villagers had made insurgent logistics more difficult, it had not induced rural Chinese to provide more than a smattering of information on the "CTs." This was hardly surprising, as the government could provide little protection in return. As a result, "the bulk of the Army was deployed on large scale and fruitless searches in the jungle."[49] These circumstances provoked disappointment and rising frustration in London as its hopes of releasing resources from Malaya reversed into a need to send yet more men.

There had also been no elections of note by this stage, in early 1950. Rural conditions and the need to concentrate on the emergency ensured that. Besides, racial tensions, heightened by the war years, remained. Malays alone were as yet recruited to the expanding Malay Regiment (which the sultans had insisted remain Malay only), Malays formed the vast bulk of the expanding police force, and Chinese assistance was coming mainly through the MCA, which had been raised by business leaders in August 1949. Set up in close liaison with the government as a welfare organization, the MCA was raising funds to help displaced Chinese squatters and providing ad hoc MCA advice on issues such as which detainees were safe to release on restriction orders. Despite its limited ability to boost recruitment of Chinese to the police, its role was significant in the face of the real threat of death, which its members faced. Even its leader, Tan Cheng Lock, had a close brush in October 1949, when a grenade was lobbed onto the podium, leaving him bloodied but unbowed.

The MCA was led by wealthy Chinese businessmen (notably tin mine and plantation owners) who had everything to lose to communism,

as did many moderate to petty Chinese shopkeepers and businessmen in the towns and larger villages. But for the 500,000 or more rural Chinese, the campaign thus far had been experienced as terror (the insurgents did not hesitate to kill "running dogs" or people who refused them help) and counter-terror, with the government viewing them as likely to incline toward whichever side intimidated or coerced them more. Huts from which it was suspected bandits had been aided had been burned (theoretically after goods were removed), whole areas had been detained under ER17D, and approximately 10,000 deported in the 1949. The idea behind this latter move, in 1949 to early 1950, was partly that remaining villagers would not have confidence unless they knew hard-line communist supporters could not return to wreak vengeance for help given to the police.

In 1950, the British even toyed with "dumping" deportees on the China coast after the new PRC government temporarily blocked deportation early that year. It also considered moving some detainees to Borneo or Christmas Island (both local governments refusing to play ball). A squatter committee had recommended resettlement of some vulnerable Chinese, but as yet many had just been moved on, with Malay-dominated state governments reluctant to release land for people they saw mostly as immigrants and illegal squatters, when many Malay villagers remained in desperate poverty. Detainees, meanwhile, peaked at about 11,000 as the deportations slowed and then temporarily ceased in 1950, and the slow release of people to resettlement, on restriction orders, or to the small rehabilitation camp at Taiping (opened in 1949), failed to keep pace. In short, by early 1950 incidents were soaring, the rather lazy expedient of deporting whole areas where squatters were seen as under insurgent influence was in abeyance, Britain had recognized the PRC, the French position in Indochina was deteriorating, and there was a general sense of crisis.[50]

One bright spot was that the police SB was beginning to build up a core of Chinese-speaking specialists, and of knowledge of the insurgents, particularly by using ex-communists and Surrendered Enemy Personnel (SEP). The very early emphasis on treating all insurgents as "bandits" who should suffer the normal penalties of law was shifting. By mid-1949, captured insurgents might still receive the death penalty (more than 200 were hanged eventually), but those surrendering were increasingly put to good use for information, on operations, and then for longer interrogation to reveal background information. Some police officers even tried to reclassify helpful captives as SEP, or otherwise avoid over-close scrutiny that might reveal civilian blood on SEP hands, and so necessitate their prosecution.[51]

Despite that bright spot, the overall feeling in early 1950 blended deep disappointment at the MNLA resurgence with frustration. The sense of crisis was to be vital to gaining new powers and legislation.

POPULATION CONTROL, GEO-DEMOGRAPHIC CONTROL, AND "CLEAR AND HOLD" (1950–52)

As noted earlier, this period began with incidents soaring in early 1950, as the MNLA, relying on its reorganized *Min Yuen* to provide support from rural Chinese settlements despite increased British area patrols, stressed sabotage, ambushes, and attacks on isolated police posts, and in addition tried to increase some attacking force sizes to upward of one to two platoons (100–200) again.

The iconic moment for the new strategy was an MNLA attack on the isolated *ulu* (upriver) police post of Bukit Kepong, in the southern state of Johore, on February 23, 1950. Two platoons of the MNLA 3rd Regiment launched a sustained attack just before dawn, resulting in 21 Malay police being killed, along with some family, as the police station and barracks were assaulted and finally burned down. The idea of such attacks was that the security forces would either withdraw from more isolated areas or at least lose local confidence, allowing a buildup of yet stronger forces and support bases.[52]

It was not to be. Bukit Kepong turned out to be a high-water mark for such rejuvenated, up-scaled attacks. In part this was because the colonial and British governments successfully used the sense of crisis to transform the campaign. Indeed, a recurrent theme of the emergency would be how the British were able to use successive perceptions of crisis (1948, 1950, and 1952) to transform executive authority and reach.

In this case, a soldier—Lieutenant General Briggs—was appointed DOO, tasked in a civil capacity to direct all SF from April 1950, thus removing police direction. By this point, he could also call on the expanding police SB using small but increasing numbers of SEP with increasing skill. Even better, state opposition to ceding overall direction of population movement (state control of land being a critical issue) was now overcome, to some extent by the sense of crisis. Previously, individual states had moved small numbers of Chinese "squatters" from the jungle fringe, sometimes simply dispersing them without providing new land, and only on a very limited scale moving such people to new village locations with support. This was despite a squatter committee having met from early on in 1948–49, and recommended that the states engage in some resettlement of rural Chinese.

The slow progress was also due to commercial and Malay reluctance to surrender good land (Malay sensitivity over land being particularly acute), limited finance, and the previous ease of deportation of noncitizen Chinese up to 1950. More than 12,000 of the latter were deported by March 1953 (a similar number being voluntarily repatriated, with around 30,000 of all races combined being deported/repatriated up to March 1953).[53] Indeed, it was often the states with the fewest Chinese that

proved most willing to resettle up to this point in time, and arguably the temporary pause in deportation for several months in 1950 (due to PRC objections) now helped to force the hand of the states, as did the sense of crisis as incidents soared following the *Min Yuen* reorganization and new MCP strategy. Together, these factors helped to coalesce a defining switch in emphasis from intimidating people in the "every man's land" of the jungle frontier into not supporting communists, to bringing the inhabitants of that space under detailed protection and controlled coercion.

In early 1950, the newly arrived Briggs was able to formulate a comprehensive plan for the emergency—often known as the "Briggs Plan"—with the support of High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney. This included comprehensive, centrally coordinated resettlement of the "squatters" and was put into full operation from June 1950. As this ultimately signaled a shift to a qualitatively new approach to counterinsurgency, it needs to be described in detail. The Briggs Plan comprised:

A. Population movement and control. Comprehensive resettlement of over 400,000 squatters (ultimately turning out to be nearer 500,000, including some who were long-settled farmers) and (added from 1951) concentration of around 600,000 laborers. The latter involved moving workers' dwellings relatively short distances to form more defensible clusters. Started in June 1950, more than three quarters of squatters were moved by the end of 1951, by which time planning was already starting to change emphasis from the actual act of movement toward future provision of greater security and aftercare. To that end, in 1952 the resettlements were rebranded "New Villages," with clinics, schools, halls, and other facilities gradually to be added to the wired perimeters, search posts, curfews, and food controls—eventually transforming initially depressing surroundings to viable and long-lasting settlements. Despite mostly being fairly sparse and depressing places in 1951 to early 1952, the vast majority of New Villages would persist into independence, with a rising overall population. The latter was notwithstanding the understandable desire of a minority of their inhabitants to return to their original area or move on once restrictions ended.[54]
B. Operational control. A unified civilian-military committee structure was established, running from the Federal War Executive Committee (FWEC) under High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney at the top, through State War Executive Committees (SWECs) under each state's Menteri Besar, to DWECs, each under a district officer's (DO) chairmanship, and ad hoc WECs when operations or problem areas spanned more than one civilian district. The leading local civilian chaired, with the senior police and military officers present, with others including SB and Chinese advisers attending as required.

   The local committee structure could help to identify areas where opportunities for more concentrated operations existed (for example, due to local SEP or new civilian informants) and to coordinate resource allocations. They could also make fine judgments, for instance on when a particular local Home Guard

(which soared from 1950 to peak at around 300,000 in 1951–52)[55] could be armed (moving through carefully graded phases for Chinese Home Guards especially), or how far to increase restrictions (curfews, restricted food) and provide extra help to particular localities.[56] They also sometimes identified "uncooperative" New Villages or towns for special attention, with concentrated visits from dignitaries, restrictive if not punitive curfews, and demands for more information coupled with requests for villagers to say how they could be given more protection. The SWECs and DWECs were the nerve and command system of Malayan counterinsurgency. They were to remain key to controlling and balancing the changing mix of coercion and enticement offered to the most contested populated areas.[57]

This committee network was also made part of the government machinery, not just an alien accretion. The chair of any committee was the senior local official, from high commissioner (FWEC, or from 1952 Federal Executive Council) through Menteri Besar, or in his absence, British adviser (SWEC) to DO (DWEC). From the abolishing of the FWEC in 1952, there would also be several Malayan "members" present at Federal Executive Council (FedExCo) when it discussed emergency matters. These members had been appointed from 1951, each being a local Malayan appointed by the high commissioner to be in charge of one or more departments, as a sort of apprentice minister.

Combined SF operations rooms were also set up at all levels, with the relevant army commander integrated into the WEC structure. At state level, a brigade commander normally set up brigade HQ in the state capital, located at the contingent (that is, state) police headquarters. That facilitated cooperation in a joint police-military operations room. This brigade commander was also a member of the SWEC. Under each brigade commander were several battalions. The battalion commanders in turn set up their HQ at Police Circle HQ at the administrative center of a district, each being a member of and operationally responsible to a DWEC. Again, there was a joint operations room.[58] In other words, the army and police HQ sat alongside each other, with their respective commanders being members of and responsible to the relevant WEC.

C. Military framework. Particular units were each to be associated with a specific area, allowing regular patrols and a buildup of intelligence, activity, and networking. The police could concentrate within this framework on policing as well as more narrowly on paramilitary counterinsurgency activity over time. The combination of resettlement and a proper framework were to be crucial. It meant that the space around rural settlements would be dominated, and populated forest fringe areas would cease to be "everywhere man's land" and openly contested space. By dominating the latter, the security forces could start to provide a measure of real security, and so "confidence," and to provide an environment more conducive to successful ambushes.
D. Striking forces. Remaining SF assets outside of the framework forces, including some military and SB, were—in the initial Briggs Plan—to be concentrated for larger-scale operations. The initial plan was to "roll up" the insurgents, concentrating striking forces to clear the country from the south first (starting with the state of Johore, just across the water from Singapore) to the north

(Kedah, Kelantan, and Perlis). The first striking forces were concentrated in Johore from June 1, 1950.

Given that the southernmost state of Johore was one of the two states where the insurgents were strongest, the roll-up floundered. Over 1951–52, an alternative emerged, that of deploying greater forces to smaller areas of opportunity. Such opportunities could be identified from where the local SWECs/DWECs and SB confirmed that a proximate MCP committee, committees, or commanders had become potential targets due to losses and/or flows of information on them. Notably, a number of key defectors or SEP from the Min Yuen and/or MNLA could provide the leverage for more sustained operations. The preferred targets, note, also shifted. As the Briggs Plan was implemented, these soon became not MNLA units per se, but their directing area committees and committee members. Targeting them started to involve, over 1951–54, increasing food control and patrols, arresting hardcore suppliers so less committed recruits would take their place and could be identified and "turned," and then using the resulting intelligence and ambushes to create killing zones around one or more New Villages for the SF to exploit. At best, SF ambushes could in turn net a percentage of SEP as well as a larger number of "kills," with the SEP fueling further successes, and making possible propaganda tailored even to small groups and individuals in the jungle.[59]

The period 1950 to late 1951, meanwhile, saw a peak of activity, as insurgent supporters fled the rapidly implemented resettlement. These flights increased MNLA size and, because the MCP's August 1950 "Guide to the Anti-Resettlement campaign" stipulated all-out opposition to resettlement and increased economic sabotage, the emergency reached its height.[60] It seems reasonable to suppose that any effective geo-demographic control is likely to create such an initial burst of recruitment for insurgents, as more supporters flee tightened controls, and some villagers react to increased government restrictions.

By October 1951, both the MCP and the SF felt themselves to be at a crisis point, as incidents peaked, and the cumulative pressure of population movement—now in its latter stages—brought a rapidly expanded and undertrained police force under severe stress. The police peaked at more than 67,000 full- and part-time police, with an additional 300,000 Home Guard and Malay Kampong Guard and 23 battalions (giving a total of 40,000 Commonwealth troops), in 1951–52. Despite his protests, Gray had been forced to accept a priority on full-pace resettlement over desperately needed police retraining, and the MCA were increasingly resentful at the immense pressure exerted on rural Chinese, and criticism by British and Malays of their failure as community leaders to do more.

Then, on October 6, 1951, the insurgents ambushed and killed High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney, setting in train sweeping British leadership renewal. At the end of the year, though the physical act of population movement was mostly complete, and peak-level forces in place, police

retraining was still desperately needed, and there was an acting high commissioner and acting commissioner of police. It seems that the act of successfully bringing the emergency and the new policy of coercive protection and geo-demographic control into place had left its key architects dead, drained, or disillusioned.

The strain had no doubt been increased by London's growing impatience. Throughout 1951, London was eagerly watching for a lull and chance to draw down forces, when instead it got a peak in activity and the dramatic ambush of its high commissioner. Fortuitously, the sense of crisis also guaranteed that Malaya could keep resources at near peak levels for longer and that its government would gain yet more centralized control. The incoming British Conservative Government of October 1951 sent its new colonial secretary, and following his report it was decided that the new high commissioner would be a military man and would combine the roles of DOO and head of civil government.

By February 1952, Sir Gerald Templer would be appointed as both DOO and high commissioner, with Colonel Arthur Young coming from the City of London as his new commissioner of police: renewed leadership would be ready to take advantage of the cumulative effects of resettlement and the Briggs Plan. In addition, Templer would be instructed to pay attention to both the emergency, and continuing the progress toward self-government already embodied in municipal elections of December 1951 (Penang) and February 1952 (Kuala Lumpur), and plans in train to increase Chinese citizenship (effected with September 1952 legislation).

Simultaneously with all this, the MCP had concluded that it could not sustain its current style of campaigning and issued orders that programmed forward for 1952 a reduction in MNLA numbers and incidents. These October 1951 directives—running to 60 pages of new instructions—also plotted a temporary shift in emphasis to increase planting (to offset resettlement), stockpiling, and political work. Its October 1951 directives (sometimes called "resolutions") thus radically changed the short- to medium-term trajectory of the campaign just before the British leadership changes. The MCP orders involved:[61]

A. Downsizing and changing units and operational emphasis. Unit sizes were to be reduced, some men transferred to armed support groups (armed work groups or parties) to help provide close support and protection of the increasingly harassed *Min Yuen*. According to a 1953 Combined Intelligence Staff report, "It is considered that as a consequence of the transfer of personnel to Armed Work Forces and Cultivation Units, the overall M.R.L.A [MNLA] strength will have been reduced by about 1,600. However, the plan to raise new Platoons to offset withdrawals into selected deep jungle bases would result in a net reduction of about 1,500. . . . The reduction of military activity, the partial withdrawal to the jungle, and pressure by Government are having some effect on M.C.P morale."[62]

Increased emphasis was also to be put on deep jungle planting and stockpiling to partially counter the way resettlement had reduced supplies from squatters, with some men to be redirected to this work. In addition, the previous emphasis on sabotage and economic attacks (for instance, on buses, trains, and slashing rubber trees) was to be severely curtailed so as to avoid harming the people's interests, as were activities such as shooting at crowds to kill running dogs. There seems to have been a belief that the level of destruction and coercion employed in 1950–52 had become counter-productive. Hence, for instance, though running dogs would sometimes have to be killed, there were strict orders to try and avoid adverse public reaction, for instance by limiting shooting into crowds, and eschewing if at all possible acid throwing.[63]

According to the Combined Intelligence Staff Report, the October 1951 directives would reach proximate units almost immediately and then trickle outward over months so the very last units might get them as much as a year later. That implied a cumulative decline in incidents over one year, from the end of 1951 until the second half of 1952.[64] The fastest pace of improvement would come around May to October 1952, as Figures 6.1–6.3 show. Insurgent-inspired incidents declined from February 1952, from an average of 506 a month in 1951, to 295 in July 1952, and 198 in September.[65]

B. Strengthening political foundations to enable later resurgence. There was to be a greater emphasis on penetrating political parties, unions, and schools and on courting the "medium national bourgeoisie," meaning noncommunist nationalists below the biggest businessmen. This was rationalized as ending a previous adventurist "left deviationism" that relied too narrowly on just the "working classes" and their rural equivalents, the squatters, farmers, and rubber tappers.

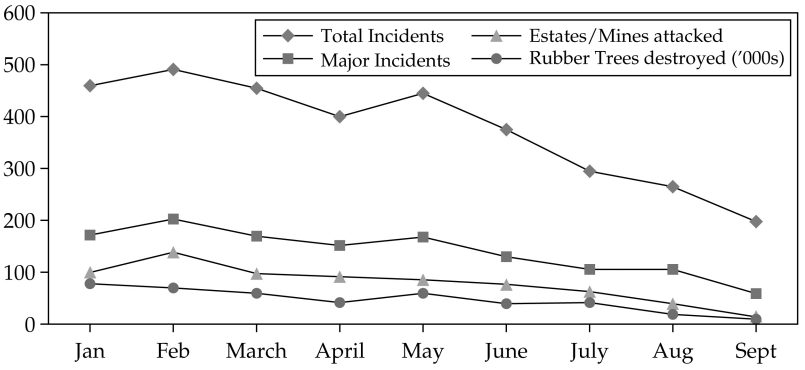

Figure 6.1.

Emergency Monthly Statistics for 1952 (Rhodes House, Oxford, Mss British Empire s486/2/3: Young Papers, Combined Intelligence Staff (Malaya) Report of October 1952, Appendices A–G)

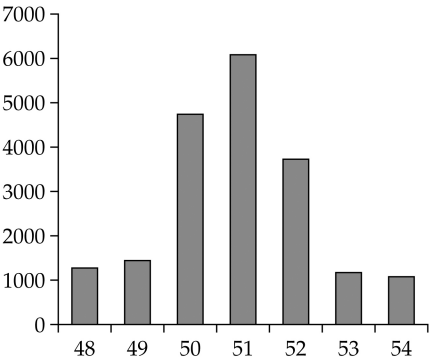

Figure 6.2.

Yearly Emergency Incidents (TNA: Air 20/10377, DOO, "Review of the Emergency," September 12, 1957)

As with the 1949 reorganization, so the 1951–52 one was intended to sacrifice immediate scale of attack for a reorganization that would reenable the MNLA for the new circumstances and presage a later upsurge based on increased political and logistic support.

In reality, the result was that incidents plummeted from about March 1952, some categories falling by half or more in just one year, but never did recover. The MCP had clearly felt compelled to take these actions, though the rapidity of the decline does beg the question of how far the directives also played into government hands, by easing pressure and allowing improvements in resettlement areas and organization to be accelerated.[66]

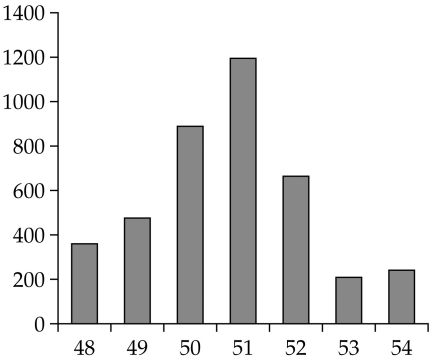

Figure 6.3.

Yearly Total Security Casualties (TNA: Air 20/10377, DOO, "Review of the Emergency," September 12, 1957)

The MCP leadership became so concerned that a year later, in late 1952, it ordered units to increase activity, but with limited effect. By then Briggs's strategy, which was above all to increase "confidence" (his key word) by protecting villagers from insurgents and dominating the surrounding areas, was firmly in place.

It should be emphasized that, in conception, the Briggs Plan that had brought about the change in insurgent tactics was not merely about physically separating insurgents from their supporters—fish from water. Nor was it entirely coercive in nature, or on the other hand a pointer toward abandoning kinetics and coercion for "winning hearts and minds." Its language was actually rather different. Security, confidence, and information were central and interlinked, as shown by the following Chiefs of Staff document on the Plan of May 1950:

3. In the long run security, and with it confidence and information, can only be restored and maintained:
   a. by demonstrating Britain's firm intention to fulfil her obligations in defence of Malaya. . . .
   b. By extending effective administration and control of all populated areas which involves
      i. A large measure of resettlement into compact groups
      ii. A strengthening of local administration
      iii. Provision of road communication in isolated populated areas,
      iv. Setting up Police Posts in these areas;
   c. by exploiting these measures with good propaganda, both constructive and destructive.

Outline Plan

4. . . . to clear the country step by step, from South to North, by:
   a. dominating the populated areas and building up a complete sense of security in them, with the object of obtaining a steady and increasing flow of information. . .
   b. breaking up the Min Yuen within the populated areas;
   c. thereby isolating the bandits from their food and information supply organisation in the populated areas;
   d. and finally destroying the bandits by forcing them to attack us on our own ground.[67]

Briggs's vision had thus been that resettlement would not just separate out the insurgents, but undermine their support, and increase the flow of information, which would anyway become easier as areas were dominated by the security forces and everyday opportunities (on Home Guard patrols, in meeting resettlement officers, and so on) to discretely pass on information increased.

Even apparently, coercive measures, such as increased food control, had a parallel, positive role to play in giving confidence and a sense of security. In November 1950, DOO Order Number 17 tightened food control. In publicizing this, the DOO told villagers that "I intend to help you," saying he knew they could not easily refuse insurgent requests, so he would make controls of food movement outside the villages strict enough that they could honestly say they could not bring or smuggle anything out. Control could simultaneously be protection and coercion. Each New Village had a limited number of gates, villagers were only allowed to take out a limited amount of water and food, and shops later had tins punctured before sale (so that food had to be consumed rapidly before spoiling). Again, something that might seem draconian, central rice cooking as introduced later on, actually had a positive side. It meant that villagers could eat their fill as precooked rice would not last if smuggled out, whereas earlier rations of uncooked rice had been significantly reduced during operations around New Villages.[68]

Gurney also worked closely with the MCA right up to his death. On October 3, he wrote a note for use by Tan Cheng Lock that bitterly complained of inadequate Chinese elite help and then detailed five types of activity in which he hoped that Tan would help secure MCA help. Gurney and Tan were due to meet to discuss use of this, and further plans to transform the MCA from a social welfare organization into a political party with wide membership, when Gurney was killed on October 6. Both the government and MCA plans continued regardless, as did Chinese resentment that they were being pressured so hard, and Malay resentment that the MCA had not done more.

Papers for a November 1951 Federal Executive War Committee continued discussions on increasing Chinese citizenship and arming more Chinese Home Guard units. The latter had been introduced in September 1950.[69] Also in November 1951, in London a paper for Cabinet argued that, "The crux of the problem is winning the loyalty and confidence of the Chinese population." By December, the MCA transformation that Gurney had encouraged was taking place as it started to change from social welfare organization into mass party. From February 1952, it also started to move into an electorally successful Alliance with UMNO (at local level first), thus providing a basis for cross-ethnic political cooperation. Chinese, however fearful that Malays might shut them out from power and from freedom to continue being "Chinese" in Malaya, could have increasing political as well as security hope. MCA expansion into New Villages, however skeptical some villagers may have been of this, also gave a potential route to seek redress of grievances, to voice needs, and to seek business links.

As Gurney had told the Legislative Assembly before his death in 1951, "this war is not to be won only with guns or the ballot-box or any other

material instrument which does not touch the hearts of men."[70] In other words. Templer, like Gurney, would emphasize "winning hearts and minds" not just alongside but, in part by, controlled coercion and spatial domination. More political measures and more controlled coercion advanced hand in glove over the period 1951–52.

By late 1952, Templer (assuming his post on February 17, 1952) and Young had settled in, and the new leadership was busy refining both the use of the Briggs Plan and the security forces as a "leaning organization," which could optimize the development of operations around clusters of New Villages, for the change in fortunes maturing over 1951–52 was one that required vigorous exploitation. In many villages, communist cells and *Min Yuen* still instilled fear, and many more lacked adequate lighting or effective perimeter wiring. Operations also still had to be refined to make the most of resettlement, which was in itself merely the precondition of success, rather than success in and of itself.

Thus, into early 1952, physical population movement was largely completed (and aftercare only just picking up), incidents were starting to fall, SF-initiated contacts were holding up, and Templer was injecting new ideas and energy into an improving situation. The implications of all this combined were that from 1952 onward there would be some scope to retrain security force personnel and to increase transitioning to, or at least association with, Malayans and also the pace of elections. The next period thus became a period of "optimization" of the campaign.

OPTIMIZATION (1952–54)

The period of "optimization" was characterized by improvement of the intelligence apparatus and of "learning organization," incremental improvements in operations around clusters of New Villages,[71] taking the fight deep into the jungle as the insurgents increased their activities there, calibrated increases in use of the "carrot" or rewards and inducements, and an increase in the pace of advance toward self-government.

Optimization was facilitated by the prior completion of most basic physical resettlement, by the slackening pace of incidents caused by the MCP's October 1951 directives, and by the fact that Templer combined civil and military power as both DOO and high commissioner, as well as bringing energy and new insights. Colonel Young as the new commissioner of police also brought a police service ethos that aimed to curb previous petty corruption and overemphasis on paramilitary duties.

This optimization was assisted by the dislocation of communist command. Chin Peng (MCP Secretary General from 1947 onward) has related how the Central Committee repeatedly failed to establish a durable headquarters base in 1952–54, because it could not both find an area safe and

able to feed a large contingent. As he later put it, "our people at that time, we had . . . a whole haversack of money . . . but we can't get a bit of food."[72] In 1952–54, the Central Committee began a series of shifts northward, culminating in its establishment on the Malayan-Thai border in 1954.[73]

Templer, meanwhile, had taken up his post as high commissioner and DOO on February 17, 1952. Previously, these two posts had been separate. So Templer had unprecedented power to hire and fire. He early on announced that he would pursue both political advance and the focused attention of the entire administration on the emergency: telling the public that bandits "don't play golf."[74] Another illustration of his propagandistic approach to policy and instilling confidence can be seen in his response to an incident near Tanjong Malim.

In March 1952, he imposed a 22-hour curfew on Tanjong Malim after a British administrative officer was ambushed and killed nearby during attempts to repair a sabotaged water supply. Templer distributed questionnaires and told villagers he would read them and only then lift restrictions if information was forthcoming. On the other hand, in March he made it clear that elections (already begun at municipal level) would continue and proceeded to execute plans for giving Chinese more citizenship. In fact, "collective punishment" was something Templer made increasingly sparing use of over time. But the model of SWECs calling in leaders to berate a "bad" village or villages, followed by intensified controls to be lifted once information improved, was used repeatedly. Even then, when Templer himself visited such villages personally, about 20 in all, he carefully blended rasping blame for previous failure to help the government, with clear invitations to say what the government needed to do to help, offers of extra protection, and hints of practical help once things improved, including such things as advice on pig breeding and assistance gaining more land, or land titles. Such visits often included or were closely followed by the civil administrators best placed to help and MCA representatives. Even then, really substantive increased flows of information from "black" areas more often than not only came when sustained joint operations were launched there.[75]

The general drift of policy was toward optimizing the preexisting trend toward basing operations around groups of New Villages. Templer's particular contribution was to supercharge the improving situation. His previous experiences, as a former director of intelligence in London and his unprecedented authority as military-civilian supremo, were both useful.

An example of Templer bringing his unique level of experience and authority to bear on an already improving situation is provided by intelligence organization. SB had already been expanding fast—including its Chinese officers, and was increasingly skillfully exploiting SEP. But Templer quickly separated SB from the CID and allowed a separate SB

Training School. Templer also introduced military intelligence officers (MIOs), who worked alongside SB at all levels to collect operational intelligence and translate it into a form usable by the army. Such refinements in SB were particularly important as it, not the army, remained the main locus for intelligence gathering and analysis throughout. Troops were only allowed to retain SEP for a minimum of time to exploit immediate information for operations, before turning them over to the SB. It was SB that then calculated if they could be sent back into the jungle immediately or straight on to more-detailed interrogation to help map the insurgent organization.[76] A few SEP were now going back into the jungle with police and soldiers, very soon after capture, to try and contact and ambush, or bring out, their ex-comrades. In 1953, a Special Operational Volunteer Force (SOVF) was also established, to allow willing SEP to serve for 18-month periods in 23-man platoons to dominate the areas in which they had been guerrillas, after their intelligence usefulness had been exhausted. Motivated by pay and especially by potential rewards, they were found only to be really useful when deployed in their old areas, under SB direction, and ideally against very specific individuals or groups.[77]

As forces experimented with permutations of intelligence-food-military operations around now consolidating New Villages, Templer also helped build a more efficient system for the collection, analysis, and dissemination (CAD) of best-practice techniques. SB and other officers cycled through SB school for short courses, thus circulating lessons. Army unit experiences were collated.[78] The preexisting Jungle Training School helped ensure that experience was passed on. At numerous levels, this CAD system was fine-tuned. Templer instigated a Combined Emergency Planning Staff he could dispatch as his eyes and ears and an Operational Research Unit that was fed patrol report forms. Templer had many of the basic lessons and practices codified in the 1952 booklet *Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya* (ATOM), which by 1958 was on its third edition.

Templer's reforms undoubtedly improved the effectiveness of the SF as a "learning organization," refining the SF's ability to study and codify what they learned. Techniques refined over 1952–54 included the classic New Village–based operations. A group of villages would be selected to correspond to a MNLA or MCP committee area. Hard supporters were detained, so the MCP had to rely on vulnerable supporters. The latter were compromised and turned into agents. Food operations were then intensified, for instance with central cooking of rice, punctured tins, and patrols increased, to make the insurgent need for supplies extreme. Then weak spots might be created as "honeypots." Security forces, warned of insurgent use of the latter by their new live intelligence, could ambush insurgents, or capture and turn yet more of them. Combined with targeted propaganda, and better amnesty terms, sometimes large numbers

of surrenders were attained as operations unfolded, especially around 1958.[79] Peak intelligence thus came not just from better organization, but from this structuring of operations to produce more "live" intelligence, which was then fed back into the operational loop.

The background to this continual refinement was a rapidly improving situation, which significantly reduced the pressure on SF. From 1953, the reduction in incidents and insurgents even allowed some more significant "striking forces" to be concentrated, to target particular larger areas, though not yet entire states as originally hoped for in 1950.

Another consequence of the MNLA's shift in emphasis, and the falling pressure on SF at the jungle's edge, was a move to increase access to and influence in the deep jungle. The MCP's October 1951 directives had called for increased use of jungle planting, stockpiling, and the *orang asli*, and the government felt compelled to respond. There was therefore an additional emphasis on winning over the *orang asli*: the indigenous population of the jungle interior. Up until 1952, the insurgents had been better at securing support among the roughly 40,000 or more *orang asli*, running *Asal* Clubs (*Asal* meaning "origin") each guided by one or more insurgents.[80] It was estimated that several thousand *orang asli* gave some support. These might help with food, tracks, and information.

The government responded to the MCP's October 1951 directives (with their emphasis on more deep jungle planting) by vastly expanding its efforts in the jungle, once the nature of the directives became clear over 1952. In 1953, the Department of Aborigines tripled in size, and the Special Air Service (SAS) were deployed to help dominate the areas around an initial 11 jungle forts, into which paramilitary Police Jungle Companies (later called the Police Field Force) were injected. These offered foci and services (including medical, veterinary, and easy provision of basic goods). Above all, it has been argued that many *orang asli* inclined toward whichever outside group seemed most active and effective at the time. As this increasingly became the security forces, the insurgent support base among the *orang asli* dwindled to a few hundred by 1956. At the end of that year, the SAS helped train about 30 into the *Senoi Paraq* (in effect, three small mobile patrols of aboriginal Home Guard).

By 1957, the SAS could concentrate again on the role they had played on and off since establishment as the "Malayan Scouts" (in effect a local SAS) in 1950, before officially becoming 22 SAS in 1952; that is, acting as a backstop or deep jungle penetration component of much larger operations aimed at pressurizing identified communist leaders and their support area. By helicopter incursion, they could help prevent the targeted group slipping away, lay traps in deep jungle to whittle down numbers, and/or ensure that the targets were caught in a vice between themselves and regular Police Field Forces and soldiers operating from closer to the New Villages.[81]

Optimization also meant that numbers of SF fell from the peak levels necessary to achieve effective population control in 1950–52. For instance, police peaked at around 67,000 (including part-time police), and by 1953 numbers were falling. Colonel Young was able to retrain the police in batches from late 1952, launching Operation *Service* by which police were instructed to go out of their way to find ways of helping the public. Young and Templer also tried to tackle corruption in the police and civil service.[82] Likewise, the Home Guard were slowly wound down over this period, and in other cases wire allowed to decay as areas around some New Villages improved, as resources were both reduced overall and concentrated at points of greatest need.

The optimization period also saw an acceleration in elections (begun in December 1951 with municipal elections in Penang) and in associating Malayans with emergency machinery at all levels. Because the WECs were entrenched in normal civil administration, it was relatively easy to manage a gradual transformation in them, simply by adding more Malayan unofficial representatives and later on by gradually promoting Malayans to positions that carried automatic membership, such as to DO (who chaired the DWECs).[83]

At federal level, the FWEC and ordinary FedExCo were combined in 1952 under Templer. There were already local "members" of government responsible for some departments in the latter, and so these now became associated with top-level decisions on the emergency. With incidents at less than one-seventh of peak levels by mid-1954, the path seemed open to faster decolonization and transition of emergency control. The posts of DOO (Lieutenant General Sir Geoffrey Bourne and later Lieutenant General Sir Roger Bower) and high commissioner (Sir Donald MacGillivray) were separated by June 1954.[84] Combining the two posts had allowed emergency efficiency to be the top priority in selection, promotion, and removals, but the overriding need to prioritize this over, say, normal administrative abilities, had declined by 1954. During 1954, state elections also proceeded, and the Alliance (then consisting of UMNO and the MCA) pushed hard for federal elections to happen by the year's end. They also briefly boycotted government committees in mid-1954, over the composition of the forthcoming FedExCo. They won minor concessions and more importantly put the British on notice that any resistance to accelerating decolonization could incur costs in emergency efficiency and confidence.

The first federal elections were duly held in 1955, with the Alliance winning all but one of the 55 elected seats. Following this, a local chief minister (UMNO's Tunku Abdul Rahman) selected most ministers, thus increasing the number of local ministers associating with top-level emergency decisions in FedExCo meetings. A separate DOO sub-committee of the FedExCo, with the relevant military and police commanders, had

been established by this point. This met separately once a week to offer advice to the FedExCo on operational planning. As the pattern of the Alliance winning almost all elections had become undeniable in 1952–54, it had been decided to associate politicians including those of the Alliance with this operations sub-committee, as well as with the FedExCo. In October 1954, five political leaders—two Malay, one Chinese, one Indian, and one European—became full members of the federal DOO sub-committee. In January 1955, "wider racial representation was provided on SWECs and DWECs as well, from which Operations sub-Committees were then formed to handle advice on day to day conduct of operations."[85] Such integration was intended to have political capital, as well as be genuinely useful in refining the "hearts and minds" side of the campaign. Actual control of day-to-day operations remained with military officers, from the DOO and his staff at federal level downward.

By this stage, in 1955, not only was local control of emergency directions slowly shifting toward local representatives, but the emergency as a whole was taking on a qualitatively different nature, as it became increasingly obvious that the MNLA was undergoing a drastic and now irreversible military decline.

MOPPING UP, PEACEMAKING, AND NORMALIZATION (1955–60)

Here the artificiality of any hard periodization is again apparent. The first "white area" was created as early as September 1953, in Malacca. A white area was one where insurgent activity was deemed low to nonexistent. Upon being declared "white," most emergency restrictions were lifted. This was aimed both at political appeasement of local opinion and politicians and as an inducement for further areas to improve.

We should also remember that within each period some areas might be at very different stages. As late as April 1956—even as white areas were spreading across the country—the DOO could talk of "screwing the people down in the strongest and most determined manner" as crucial for "bad" areas (involving intense food control, patrols, and intelligence activity). One of the responsibilities of the new Emergency Operations Council (EOC) from March 1956 was to take the political decision on when and where "Uncooperative Areas" might require "strong and positive action."[86]

Notwithstanding the variegated nature of the campaign, by 1955 it was clearly in a qualitatively different situation. More and more white areas were being declared, with little sign of these reversing. Militarily, the back of the insurgency had now been broken, and MNLA forces remaining in Malaya, though still significant in scale, were becoming more isolated.

Politically, the Alliance had swept most municipal and then state elections, and its representatives were already functioning as nominated "members" (quasi or trainee ministers) on the FedExCo for functions such as mines and communications (an experiment started in 1951). The Alliance had also called for federal elections to happen before the end of 1954, with a move toward full self-government to start afterward. Federal elections would finally occur in July 1955, with the winner to form a government.

It was in this context that the Tunku announced in early January 1955 that, if elected, his ministers would seek an amnesty for insurgents, perhaps even allowing communists to join the constitutional process if they would agree to peace. Previous "surrender terms" only promised "good treatment" and left open the possibility of prosecution if a person had civilian blood on his or her hands. What followed was "behind-closed-doors" jostling. The Tunku and MCA colleague Tan Cheng Lock already sat on the DOO operations sub-committee. Its January 17 discussion concluded that no changes in surrender terms should happen for now. The British representatives emphasized that they did not want any recognition of the MCP or to allow it to convert declining insurgency into now potentially more dangerous subversion. In fact they far preferred no meeting at all with Chin Peng. The Tunku acknowledged at this stage that direct "negotiation" was impossible but did not want to rule it out. The holding position was that the colonial government made public, in March 1955, the de facto policy of not generally prosecuting SEP.

The MCP subsequently sent letters to Alliance ministers, starting in May 1955, offering to negotiate with them. In July 1955, the Alliance won 54 out of 55 elected seats, a majority in the Legislative Council. Alliance leader Tunku Abdul Rahman became chief minister, appointing most ministers bar those for key functions such as security and finance. Britain agreed that it would hold a Constitutional Conference in London in 1956 (January–February) to discuss further constitutional advance, with the Alliance clear that it would seek a date for full self-government. Transition—at every level from replacing Europeans in districts through to handing overall emergency direction to Malayans—now catapulted to urgent status.

The Tunku also made clear in August 1955 that he should offer to meet Chin Peng, even if only to explain new amnesty terms due for September 1955. Various statements also indicated, however, that he would not be bound on what he could and could not say. The Amnesty terms he was to discuss stipulated that all AMSEP (Amnesty SEP) could surrender to the public or take advantage of safe areas to facilitate their surrender, that SF should adhere to instructions to "shout before you shoot" rules, and that after "investigations" AMSEP showing peaceful intent would be reintegrated into society. Others would be offered the chance to leave for China. Above all, for the Amnesty period they would not be prosecuted for any crime committed under communist direction before

Amnesty day.[87] The effect of these terms was limited, however, by September to October repeats of MCP offers to negotiate, and the clear desire of the Alliance to do this.[88] Preliminary meetings of October to November hammered out the terms for a formal meeting at the border town of Baling on December 28 and 29, 1955.

The switch from British to Alliance initiative in 1955 was dramatic, with the Alliance politicians needing to be seen to be doing everything possible to allow a peace and reduce irksome emergency restrictions. By contrast, the British instinct was to fear allowing Federation ministers to "negotiate," lest they throw away a winning hand in an attempt to accelerate improvement, and so unblock the way to final independence.[89]

Yet the British could not block the Alliance without risking withdrawal of its members from WECs and other bodies (as they briefly did in 1954). The British encouraged ministers, if they must go, only to explain amnesty terms and to take Singapore's fiercely anticommunist chief minister, David Marshall. The high commissioner also announced on November 30 that continuation of the emergency at its present level would not be an impediment to further constitutional advance.

The negotiations themselves need not detain us. The Tunku, David Marshal, and Tan Cheng Lock faced MCP Secretary General Chin Peng and two of his colleagues in a school house at the border town of Baling. The British were not active participants. The Tunku insisted that anyone surrendering could choose between going to China, or investigations prior to reintegration: Chin Peng could not accept investigations or anything smacking of "surrender." The Tunku refused legal recognition of the MCP. Without agreement, a visibly deflated Chin Peng returned to the jungle—not, however, before agreeing that if the Tunku gained a British promise of independence and local control of security forces, his men would "lay down" their arms.

The British breathed a massive sigh of relief. The Amnesty ended on February 8, 1956 (leaving normal surrender terms), having netted just 74 AMSEPs, and the January–February 1956 Constitutional Conference easily agreed to accelerate Malayan decolonization.[90] It agreed that the target date for independence should be August 31, 1957. In terms of "transition," and possibly with a view to Chin Peng's concession at Baling, it also agreed an earlier transfer of the direction of internal security.

In the period before independence, overall direction of the emergency was to transfer to a minister for Internal Defence and Security, who would in turn report to the FedExCo. This happened in March 1956. Tunku Abdul Rahman was not only chief minister but also minister for Internal Defence and Security. As such, he became chair of a new EOC. Below this EOC, of course, SWECs had long been chaired by the Malay Menteri Besar, with the SWECs' European "executive secretaries" acting as the key link between the DOO staff in Kuala Lumpur and the SWECs, to

communicate policies downward.[91] As late as July 1957, 7 of the 11 executive secretaries were still European.[92]

The DOO, meanwhile, remained responsible to the EOC for day-to-day operations and retained operational command of all the SF allotted to them. The EOC was also assisted by a Working Party of professional advisers, including the directors of Intelligence and of Information.[93] Furthermore, in the words of the DOO Report of 1957, "actual control of British military units remained the ultimate responsibility of the British GOC Malaya" and of unit commanders. When the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement was finally signed in October 1957, this remained the case. By that point, most British and Commonwealth troops had been concentrated in particular areas—notably Perak and the north Johore—reducing visibility, even though the number of battalions employed had only declined to 21. North Johore and Perak initially remained under operational control of HQ 17 Gurkha Division, the rest of the country now coming under control of the independent Malaya's HQ Federation Army, which assumed control of all Federation Army units.[94]

Below these higher levels, in the SWECs and DWECs, things also changed more rapidly in 1957–58, as Malayans were promoted to replace retiring British officials, Dos, and higher police officers.[95] Even so, a few British stayed in high police and administrative posts, including in SB. One SB officer—Tim Hatton—even became acting director on occasions before finally retiring in 1967.[96]

Counterinsurgency campaigning thus progressed fairly seamlessly across independence. There was a renewal of the 1955 Amnesty terms as the *Merdeka* (Independence) Amnesty of September 1957–1958, and in October 1957 the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA) came into effect, together with British agreements to provide an additional £33 million in grants and loans over 1957–61.[97] AMDA allowed the small "Commonwealth Strategic Reserve" (CSR, 28 Commonwealth Infantry Brigade) of British-Gurkha units plus a small Australian and New Zealand presence to continue in Malaya, ultimately until 1971.[98] AMDA also preserved the option of using the CSR and air assets in support of "Commonwealth and international obligations," though requiring Britain to seek prior Malayan agreement for use of its bases in support of non-British territories.[99] This Commonwealth presence suited a Malaya, which needed plenty of time to develop its tiny navy and air force, with the latter insufficient to do more than assist emergency transport duties until after 1960.[100]

CONCLUSIONS

There are additional areas of Malayan counterinsurgency that this chapter has not had space to address, such as the continual refinement of surrender, reward, propaganda, and rehabilitation programs.[101]

Those omissions have been necessary to keep the emphasis on outlining the main phases of the emergency and the predominant "recipe" for counterinsurgency in each one. That approach paves the way for a number of conclusions about the Malayan emergency specifically and about the analysis of counterinsurgency campaigns more generally:

1. The Malayan emergency proceeded through distinct phases of (1) terror and counter-terror, (2) creation and exploitation of geo-demographic control, (3) optimization, and (4) normalization and transition. Each one had a qualitatively different blend of counterinsurgency techniques. Particular tactics or techniques (coercive, kinetic, winning hearts and minds) existed in all phases, so anyone suffering confirmation bias toward one sort of tactic or another will find what he or she wants. What matters is tracing the change in emphasis among these, and the nature of the machinery and assumptions that patterned their use.
2. All the Malayan phases involved massive application of forces and resources, and dislocation and far-reaching controls for much of the population. For a population growing from 5 to 6 million, around 500,000 were resettled, around 600,000 concentrated, and at least 33,000 in total detained (peak averages being 8,000–10,000 in 1950–52 before falling sharply).[102] About another 30,000 were deported or repatriated voluntarily, more than 8,719 of them as late as 1951.[103] Up to 23 battalions (still 21 battalions as late as 1957) encompassed a peak of 40,000 Commonwealth forces combined with 67,000 full- and part-time police and up to 300,000 Home Guard. To put this in context, for a U.K. population of more than 60 million the equivalent would be resettling 5 million and deporting and repatriating 300,000. For the United States, the equivalent would be more than five times those numbers. In addition, the sweeping nature of emergency powers amounted to a suspension of many of the human rights enshrined in the UN 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[104] At times of nearby operations, a New Village might be surrounded by barbed wire, its adult men enlisted for Home Guard shifts, its workers forced to depart for their tapping or tin-mining work through limited gates after curfew ended and following searches, with little water and food for their lunch. Villagers discovered aiding the insurgents could be detained without trial and deported if not citizens. In a few cases, Templer went further, threatening collective punishment to encourage increased cooperation, or even enforcing it. So even with the more controlled, calibrated, and protected environment that slowly emerged across 1950–54, and even with the gradual appearance of village elections and facilities such as community halls and schools, villagers still experienced a highly coercive atmosphere.
3. Any attempts to shoehorn Malaya into a model of British counterinsurgency working primarily by "intimidating" the population more than the enemy, and by 'terroristic' policies would, however, miss vitally important nuances. That would ignore the way that policies in the key transformative Stage 2 shifted. The key period for excesses was Phase 1 of terror and counter-terror, when for instance some villagers were removed with little or no attempt at resettlement, up to 10,000 people were deported in the single year of 1949,

and there were instances both of small and less frequently of larger numbers of unarmed civilians being shot. There was little effective protection of the rural population in this period, with many villages becoming dangerous "every man's land." As noted, however, this earlier period had ambivalent results, reducing insurgent unit size but probably increasing insurgent replenishment and support rates. By comparison, the transformative Phase 2 gradually reduced excesses and increased the use of targeting of controls (notwithstanding some early actions that amounted to collective punishment). It also featured simultaneous attempts to increase confidence in personal safety and in a better future. Indeed, precisely as villagers were targeted for more intense food-intelligence-SF operations, they experienced both increased controls (for instance, tighter rice rations or central cooking) and increased requests to specify their needs (as varied as extra protection, improved pig production, and more help registering land titles). It was a case of cumulatively applying more stick and more carrot over time from 1950 (rather than more of just one or the other), combined with increasing protection, less collateral damage, and more precise targeting of actions.

4. Undifferentiated models of counterinsurgency are, therefore, likely to prove of varying utility across different periods, and any "one-size-fits-all" model would also ignore the issue of sequencing. Using the analogy of making tea, one can illustrate the problem by wrongly assuming you can apply a generalized model of counterinsurgency regardless of the phase of campaign. If you simply put everything in a pot—water, tea leaves, and milk—and boil—what you get is not really what you wanted. Sometimes one thing may have to happen before another for a recipe to work. Specifically, for instance, some aspects of Stage 1 insurgency (such as less discriminate mass detentions and large army sweeps) may have been largely unavoidable in 1948 Malayan conditions, to establish base-level intelligence and break up the largest insurgent units.[105]
5. The Stage 2 model that achieved a one-way direction of improving security in Malaya is an excellent demonstration of how changes across periods do matter. This phase saw the emergence of geo-demographic control (dual control of contested space and populations as the building blocks for kinetic- and population-centric actions). The army continued to have as its main tasks patrols and ambushes, but these were made to contribute mainly to the framework (units protecting particular areas to provide general security) or to specific intensified operations around one or more New Villages. The latter operations were refined over this and the optimization period until they commenced with arrests in New Villages to remove hard-line suppliers, followed by compromising softer suppliers who took their place, tightening food controls, then the exploitation of live intelligence from those turned to ambush insurgents. Ideally, despite 67 percent of eliminations being kills, such intelligence-led patrolling and ambushes would produce SEP, providing yet more live intelligence, so creating a virtuous circle. The army achieved far higher contact rates where they were able to exploit good intelligence, and the model generated the crucial information, as well as ensuring that enemy nerve cells (committees and commanders) were priority targets. By comparison, pre-1950 army sweeps, however necessary at the time, had been inefficient, and patrols without good information were vastly less efficient.

6. A system was developed in the second phase that was capable of tightly integrating population- and enemy-centric actions, coordinating all civil and security forces. Army commanders were made members of the relevant level of each civilian-directed WEC, and in addition had their operational headquarters alongside the relevant level of police headquarters, with whom they shared operations rooms. In addition, SB remained the main controller of SEP and provider of intelligence, which MIOs translated into a form usable by the army. Thus, the army retained mainly security, killing, and kinetic functions, but this system of WECs, joint operations rooms, and MIOs with SB made the army a tightly coordinated cog within a paradigm of geo-demographic or population control. Sitting alongside it, a DOO and DOO committee could also cascade general strategy downward through the WEC system.
7. Optimization in Phase 3 involved building on earlier phases. Hence, in the key transformative phase of 1950–52, the emphasis was on breakneck resettlement and police expansion to the detriment of training. Substantial retraining and then Operation *Service* only got underway from the last quarter of 1952, by which time incidents were already plummeting and insurgent numbers and activity declining notably. Nevertheless, Templer and the combined military-civil powers he was given supercharged an improving situation, with improvements to SB, collection, assessment, and dissemination of intelligence and good practice, and entire focus of administrative hiring and movements on emergency needs, being key factors.
8. Politics, exceptionalism, and the limits of planning. Any campaign is to some extent *sui generis*, and these impose limits and costs on the nature and cost of "success." In the Malayan case, the colonial context, whereby the British personnel were embedded as civil servants and police commanders, facilitated the WEC system. The dearth of food in the jungle also made food control viable and useful, while the communists faced serious inter- and intra-ethnic divisions and lacked a supportive neighboring power. Even so, British pragmatism and concessions played an important part. Core aims were modest: a stable, anticommunist government, not ill-disposed toward Britain. Within that, the British recognized that if the role of counterinsurgency was to win space for an effective local elite to take over, you could not be too precise about the nature of that elite, and the political structures and practices it needed to thrive. Overprescriptive nation-building or state-building might have significantly increased the cost of counterinsurgency in Malaya, as UMNO protests of 1946–47 and UMNO-MCA boycotts of councils in 1954 forewarned. Instead, the British quietly reduced focus on their original aim of producing a genuinely multiracial "Malayan nation" and issue rather than race-driven political parties, and gradually handed more powers to the Alliance of the ethnically based UMNO and MCA (and later on Malayan Indian Congress). They were lucky that these allies were relatively benign, for instance with the traditionalist and business-orientated MCA not particularly inclined to encourage high levels of violence against their enemies in resettlements, as some loyalist Kikuyu seem to have been in Kenya. Even so, it turned out that even in these favorable circumstances, who your plausible allies were, and what they needed and wanted to thrive, circumscribed the type of success, nation-building, state-building, and endgame that were viable.

NOTES

The author would like to acknowledge British Academy funding, which paid for key parts of the research that underpin this chapter, notably in archives in Malaysia, Singapore, and Australia.

1. Malay and Chinese spellings for local names and locations are given throughout as commonly known in the period; hence "Johore," not the more modern "Johor"; "Negri," not "Negeri"; and so on.

2. I summarize the British plans for a strategic reserve (and Malayan forces) in more detail in my *Defence and Decolonisation in Southeast Asia: Britain, Malaya and Singapore 1941–1968* (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 2001).

3. The Malayan Communist Party (MCP) handled anti-Japanese resistance from Malaya's fall in 1941–42 until liberation, with assistance from British officers and supply drops from 1943 to 1945.

4. The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA): Air 20/10377, Director of Operations (R. H. Bowen), "Review of Emergency in Malaya, June 1948—August 1957," September 12, 1957. This document will henceforth be referred to as DOO Review 1957. Other sources cite slightly higher MNLA figures, with an estimated peak of 8,200 in January 1951, declining slightly to 7,800 by January 1952. The general pattern is, however, the same. See also WO 291/167, Operational Research Unit (Far East) Report 1/57, "A Comparative Study of the Emergencies in Malaya and Kenya," 1957.

5. MNLA was the official name from February 1949, sometimes rendered MRLA (Malayan Races Liberation Army). This comes down to different interpretations of *Min tsu*, with Special Branch using "Races" in the 1940s–50s, and Secretary General Chin Peng preferring "National."

6. *Annual Report on the Malayan Union for 1947* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 1–3, for a population of 4.9 million at the September 1947 census.

7. Ibid. In reality, interpretation of the figures is politically sensitive. Hence, "Malays" pure and simple were only 43.4 percent or 2.1 million, but with "Malaysians" (similar groups from surrounding areas) added at 267,030 (5.4 percent), becoming 49 percent. Indians at 534,148 were 11 percent, Europeans, Eurasians, and others totaled 2 percent, and the total 4,902,678. Chinese were 1,882,874.

8. See the discussion in Karl Hack, " 'Iron Claws on Malaya': The Historiography of the Malayan Emergency," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 30, no. 1 (March 1999), pp. 99–125, especially 115–23.

9. Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack, *War Memory and the Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012), chs. 4 and 9, pp. 112–21, 278–85.

10. For a similar analysis of Kenya, and the vital importance of government distribution of resources in allowing older patrons to reestablish patron-client groups and authority there, see Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 146–47, passim.

11. Five of the nine states had been loosely federated in the Federated Malay States 1895–96, but even this was loosened somewhat before the war, in a futile

attempt to persuade the remaining states to also consider some sort of centralization.

12. Before the war, very few Chinese were citizens, though those born in the British Straits Settlements were British subjects. The citizenship offered around the time of the Malayan Union offered to naturalize most Chinese born in the Union area, but the rules under the Federation required long unbroken residence in the country as well as birth there for non-Malays.

13. For a discussion of the tango of intimidation and repression by British and communists and the literature thereon, see Karl Hack, " 'Between Two Terrors': People's History and the Malayan Emergency," in *A People's History of Insurgency,* ed. Hannah Gurman (New York: Free Press, 2013), pp. 17–49; and "Everyone Lived in Fear: Malaya and the British Way of Counter-Insurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23, no. 4–5 (2012), pp. 671–99.

14. Karl Hack, "The Origins of the Asian Cold War: Malaya 1948," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 (October 2009), pp. 471–96. Arguments about whether or not there were "communist instructions" are a total red herring, not to say naïve about the way international communism worked at this point. The critical point is that Malayan communists regarded themselves as part of a world movement, and so the international communist "line" as a guiding, rather than a determining, light. See also Karl Hack and Geoff Wade, "Introduction: The Origins of the Southeast Asian Cold War," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 (October 2009), pp. 441–48.

15. Hack, "The Origins of the Asian Cold War: Malaya 1948."

16. Ibid.; A. J. S. Stockwell, " 'A Widespread and Long-Concocted Plot to Overthrow Government in Malaya'? The Origins of the Malayan Emergency," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21, no. 3 (1993), pp. 66–88.

17. The performance and deficiencies—in personnel and in lack of focus in reports—of manuscripts is discussed in more detail in Leon Comber, *Malaya's Secret Police 1945–1960: The Role of the Special Branch in the Malayan Emergency* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008), pp. 25–58.

18. David French, *The British Way in Counterinsurgency, 1945–1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 75–82, citing TNA: CO 717/167/5, unidentified to Sir M. Logan, November 16, 1948. He notes that just about the only thing governors could not do using emergency powers was to establish military courts to try offenders.

19. There is a good discussion of how these ERs sometimes also threw the burden of proof onto the accused in both Malaya and Kenya, in ibid., pp. 80–81.

20. Anthony Short, *In Pursuit of Mountain Rats: The Communist Insurrection in Malaya* (Singapore: Cultured Lotus, 2000), pp. 277–81. First published as *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya* (London: Frederick Muller, 1975).

21. For the early use of the term *approach to counter terror,* see ibid., pp. 160–69. More detail is added from U.K. documents in Huw Bennett, " 'A Very Salutary Effect': The Counter-Terror Strategy in the Early Malayan Emergency, June 1948 to December 1949," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (June 2009), pp. 415–44.

22. David French interviewed on "The British Way" episode of Radio 4's *Terror through Time* series, first broadcast Tuesday, October 15, 2013, and available on iPlayer at http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b03cmt53/Terror_Through

_Time_The_British_Way/. This echoes French, *The British Way in Counter-insurgency*, p. 251: "they also won because the civil population came to understand that the security forces could intimidate them more effectively than could the insurgents."

23. Several conferences and collections have trod this path over 2007–13, including Matthew Hughes (ed.), "British Ways of Counter-Insurgency: A Historical Perspective," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23, no. 4–5 (2012); and Paul Dixon (ed.), *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: From Malaya to Iraq and Afghanistan* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

24. The debate on stalemate versus continuous improvement across 1950–52 is traced in Hack, ' "Iron Claws on Malaya' "; "The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (2009), pp. 383–414; and most comprehensively in "Using and Abusing the Past: The Malayan Emergency as Counterinsurgency Paradigm," in Dixon (ed.), *The British Approach to Counter-insurgency*, pp. 207–42.

25. The Malaysian case involved four elderly relatives of the victims of the 1948 Batang Kali killings of 24 Chinese asking for judicial review in the British high court and of British government refusal to hold an inquiry. The court ruled against them on September 4, 2012, and they appealed in 2013. For the initial judgment in Keyu et al. vs. Secretaries of State, see http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/media/judgments/2012/keyu-judgment-04092012.

26. The British high court decided on October 5, 2012, in favor of Kenyan plaintiffs that they could attempt to sue the British government. On June 6, 2013, the British government consequently announced the offer of £19.9 million compensation to be distributed among 5,228 ex-detainees. For the background to the Kenya trial, see articles by Stephen Howe, David Anderson, Huw Bennett, and Caroline Elkins in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39, no. 5 (December 2011). The Foreign Office stash—of files removed from colonies at independence as sensitive—is now to be found at TNA: FCO 141. The judgment is at www.judiciary.gov.uk/.../Judgments/mutua-fco-judgment-05102012.pdf.

27. For discussion of "exemplary force," see Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Insurgency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 6.

28. The term was used to me by BBC journalist Fergal Keane as his shorthand for how I was describing Malayan policies, in an interview held on April 9, 2013, and first broadcast in The British Way' episode of Radio 4's *Terror through Time* series. I adopt the term here with due gratitude.

29. DOO Review 1957, p. 21.

30. Gerald Templer, "Preface to the First Edition," in *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*, 3rd ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Headquarters, Malaya Command, 1958). See also my discussion of this in Karl Hack, "Everyone Lived in Fear: Malaya and the British Way of Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23, no. 4–5 (2012), pp. 679, 686–87.

31. *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations*—increasingly infrequent "contacts" were expected to be on the basis of information (Preface to Third Edition, Ch. XI), this intelligence often coming from food control operations around clusters of New Villages directed by "war executive committees" (Ch. XI, p. 1).

32. Deportation followed a slightly complicated path, falling from a 1949 peak of around 10,000 to very few in 1950, rising to around 5,000 again in 1952, and then quickly tailing off.

33. Tan Chin Siong (possibly a pseudonym) to Tan Cheng Lock, letter translated on May 23, 1950, Folio 24.30, H.S. Lee Papers, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

34. The borders of these periods could be adjusted slightly according to purpose, as several key processes overlap. Hence, 1952–54 was the period when "optimization" around resettlement predominated, but incremental improvements continued thereafter. Equally, for "transition" and "normalization," political progress gathered pace from 1951 (first municipal elections, member system) onward, and white areas (with emergency restrictions lifted) were introduced from 1953.

35. Ignoring this point can result in naïve assumptions, such as that Malaya had changed to an overwhelmingly positive, "winning hearts and minds" mode as a whole by 1952–53. Deportations peaked at around 1,000 in 1949, fell sharply in 1950–51, rose to around 5,000 in 1952, and then trailed off rapidly. More work is needed on how far deportations in 1952 and 1949 (with a lot of group deportations as well as individual orders in the latter) followed a similar or differing pattern.

36. Short, *In Pursuit of the Mountain Rats*, pp. 102–4. Chin Peng (as told to Ian Ward and Norma Miraflor), *Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2003), p. 232; C. C. Chin and Karl Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng: New Light on the Malayan Emergency* (Singapore: Singapore University Press), pp. 144–47.

37. *The Straits Times*, July 31, 1948; and Imperial War Museum, Davis Papers, Box 6. Don Sinclair, of McAllister and Co Ltd, Penang, September 7, 1949, to Mr. N. Alexander. Sinclair claimed some of his Chinese respondents reported 26 squatters had been shot out of hand near Batu Arang, including women with children in their arms, with some soldiers refusing to open fire. Chin Peng et al., *Alias Chin Peng*, p. 227. By contrast, the action was officially reported as 26 Field Regiment killing 22 bandits and capturing 18, TNA: CO 717170/1, Farelf SitRep 4, July 28 to August 10, 1948; Bennett, " 'A Very Salutary Effect,' p. 439.

38. Chin and Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng*, pp. 144–49.

39. Instructions on Use of Force, HQ Malaya Command to regional headquarters, August 14, 1948, John Davis Papers, Imperial War Museum, London.

40. Short, *In Pursuit of the Mountain Rats*, pp. 160–66. Imperial War Museum, Davis Papers, Box 6. Don Sinclair, of McAllister and Co Ltd, Penang, September 7, 1949, to Mr. N. Alexander. Bennett, " 'A Very Salutary Effect,' pp. 433–37.

41. Hack, "Everyone Lived in Fear," p. 680, citing Gurney speech of November 18 to the Legislative Council (on "hardship . . . caused to innocent people") and communication to the Colonial Office of December (that the Chinese inclined toward whoever frightened them more).

42. See judgment in the case of Keyu [Chong Nyok Keyu] et al. vs. Secretaries of States for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and of Defence, September 4, 2012, online at http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/Resources/JCO/Documents/Judgments/keyu-sec-state-foreign-commonwealth-affairs-judgment-04092012.

pdf. This was the case brought for judicial review of the British decision not to hold an inquiry into the Batang Kali massacre.

43. See Short, *In Pursuit of the Mountain Rats*, pp. 161–66. See also Sinclair, of McAllister and Co Ltd, for allegations that there had been numerous reports people had been killed and then described afterward as having been running away.

44. Ng See Seng, "Sir Henry Gurney as High Commissioner during the Malayan emergency, Oct. 1948–Oct. 1951: A Critical Assessment," MA dissertation, Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education, Singapore, 2002, pp. 56–58.

45. Tan Chin Siong to Tan Cheng Lock. For more detail on the Chinese rural experience of the emergency (especially up to 1950) as being between two terrors, see Karl Hack, "Malaya—Between Two Terrors: 'People's History' and the Malayan Emergency," in *Hearts and Minds: A People's History of Counterinsurgency*, ed. Hannah Gurman (New York: The New Press, 2013), pp. 17–49.

46. DOO Review 1957, p. 9, para. 27.

47. Tan Chin Siong to Tan Cheng Lock.

48. DOO Review 1957, p. 9, para. 29.

49. Ibid., para. 30, "there was little information forthcoming about the CTs."

50. TNA: CO 1022/132, Detention and Deportation.

51. See, for instance, Arkib Negara Malaysia: 1957/0574060, covering surrendered bandits in Negri Sembilan (NS) in 1948–49. NS Commissioner of Police John Harrison seems to have tried to avoid valuable SEP being lost to investigation.

52. Special Branch interrogations (including those of Mat Indera, Marie bin Kadir, and excerpts from that of Tan Guat) released for Utusan Malaysia versus Mohamad Sabu trial, Penang High Court, October 8–9, 2012, and in the author's possession.

53. TNA: CO 1022/132, Detention and Deportation.

54. The nature and persistence of resettlements and New Villages is discussed in more detail in my, "Malaya—Between Two Terrors," pp. 17–49.

55. DOO Review 1957, pp. 20–21, gives 300,000 as the peak figure for the Home Guard in January 1951. At that time, it was separate Chinese and Kampong Guards, the two amalgamating in July of that year. By 1957, the Home Guard was down to 107,000, of whom 8,500 were in operational sections.

56. Progress Report on Home Guard for the Advisory Committee to the Federal War Committee, June 30, 1950; and 21.37a, Appendix D to Agenda for the Federal War Committee meeting of November 15 , 1951, in Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, H. S. Lee Papers, File 21.70.

57. See, for instance, Singapore: ISEAS, H. S. Lee Papers File 79/2 passim for several examples of such treatment by Selangor's SWEC in 1952–53. For more detail, see Hack, "Everyone Lived in Fear," pp. 688–89.

58. DOO Review 1957, p. 19.

59. Hack, "The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm," p. 404.

60. Chin and Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng*, p. 153.

61. TNA: CO 1022/187. I have analyzed these at greater length in my: " 'Iron Claws on Malaya,' " pp. 99–125; and "British Intelligence and Counterinsurgency in the Era of Decolonisation," *Intelligence and National Security* 14, no. 2 (1999), pp. 124–55. Chin Peng—MCP secretary general—has broadly confirmed these

interpretations in Chin and Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng*, pp. 143–68; and Chin Peng, *My Side of History* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2003), pp. 270, 299–300.

62. Rhodes House, Oxford: Young Papers, MS British Empire s486/2/1, "Review of the Security Situation in Malaya: Aim and Strategy of the MCP," around 1953, esp. para. 5. See also in the same papers, s486/2/3, CIS(52)(7)(Final), Combined Intelligence Staff Review of the Emergency as of 30th September 1952, October 10, 1952.

63. The full October Resolutions, running to more than 60 pages, are in TNA: CO 1022/187. For intelligence analyses of them, see Hack, "British Intelligence and Counter-Insurgency in the Era of Decolonisation," pp. 124–55. For Chin Peng's view of their significance, as secretary general of the time, see Chin and Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng*, pp. 153–64.

64. Rhodes House, Oxford, Young Papers, reports on the Malayan Emergency, 1952–53; Hack, "British Intelligence and Counter-Insurgency in the Era of Decolonisation," pp. 137–38.

65. Rhodes House, Oxford, Young Papers, CIS (52) (7) Final, "Review of the Security Situation in Malaya as at 30th September 1952," by the Combined Intelligence Staff. Dated October 1952.

66. Stubbs makes this point rather well, though he goes further and suggests that it was an MCP miscalculation that allowed the new measures for "winning hearts and minds" to be implemented and have effect. In reality what took effect in 1952 was more the tightening of control and protection around New Villages, with the impact of slow improvements (police retraining and Operation *Service* were toward the end of the year) and elections and extended citizenship for Chinese (September 1951) likely to be slower to have an effect. Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948–1960* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 151–52.

67. See CAB 21/1681, MAL C(50)23, May 24, 1950, Appendix, "Federation Plan for the Elimination of the Communist Organisation and Armed Forces in Malaya (the Briggs Plan)," report by the COS for Cabinet Malaya Committee, as cited in Anthony Stockwell, *Malaya*, vol. II (London: HMSO 1995), pp. 217–21 for this document.

68. Hack, "Everyone Lived in Fear," p. 686.

69. DOO Review 1957, p. 20. The Chinese Home Guard were amalgamated with Malay "Kampong" Guards in July 1951 as a single Home Guard.

70. *Straits Times Annual 1952* (Singapore: Straits Times, 1953), preface.

71. These operations typically involved increasing food control and patrols, arresting hardcore suppliers to force reliance on softer supporters, turning some of the latter and generating live intelligence on insurgent intentions to facilitate ambushes and captures and so creating a cycle leading to local MCP committee dissemination or elimination. For a summary, see Hack, "The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm," pp. 383–414. DOO Instruction no. 36 of June 26, 1954, described food controls as "The main weapons of DWEC against the CT" going forward. See Singapore, ISEAS, H. S. Lee 7.44/1-19.

72. Chin and Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng*, p. 162.

73. Chin Peng, *My Side of History*, 2003, pp. 323–29.

74. *The Straits Times*, Sunday, April 13, 1952, p. 1.

75. National Army Museum, Templer Papers, 7410-29-1-78, Templer, "Speech at Sepang," August 1953, passim. In fact, many of these villages continued to be a problem (in the sense of a lack of information) until concentrated operations broke the nearby insurgent leadership, see, for example, *The Straits Times*, April 10, 1954, p. 7, for Templer threatening Sepang in 1954 with removal of its pigs if cooperation did not improve.

76. DOO Review 1957, p. 15.

77. Ibid., p. 21.

78. Hack, "British Intelligence and Counter-Insurgency in the Era of Decolonisation," pp.129–33; TNA: CO 1022/27.

79. Karl Hack, "Corpses, Prisoners of War and Captured Documents: British and Communist Narratives of the Malayan Emergency, and Intelligence Transformation," *Intelligence and National* Security 14, no. 4 (1999), pp. 216, 228–29.

80. The 1947 census suggested around 30,000 "nomadic aborigines," though later estimates could be considerably higher. Obviously, quantifying mobile jungle peoples with whom contact was variable is tricky. See John Leary, *Violence and the Dream People: The Orang Asli and the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1960* (Colombus: Ohio University Press, 1995), p. 2. DOO Review 1957, p. 18, gave 50,000–60,000 as its estimate, but that is most likely too high. *Annual Report on the Malayan Union for 1947*, p. 1. *Annual Report on the Federation of Malaya 1948*, p. 1.

81. DOO Review 1957, p. 18.

82. The sharper-eyed reader will note that the same Colonel Young then went to Kenya in 1954 only to resign after months saying that local cover-ups of abuses and lack of support made a similar Operation Service and reforms there ineffective. See Rhodes House, Oxford, Young Papers.

83. Arkib Negara Malaysia (henceforth ANM) 2005/0018549, Minutes of Meeting of Negri Sembilan SWEC, Monday, October 3, 1955, for instance. The chair was Honourable Enche Shamsuddin bin Nain as Menteri Besar, and also in attendance were the British Adviser, Acting Chief Police Officer Enche Mohd. Salleh bin Ismail, Commander Gurkha 26 Brigade, British Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Planters' Representative, two more Europeans, and Yap Mau Tatt and Honourable Enche Idris bin Matsil.

84. DOO Review 1957, p. 8.

85. Ibid., p. 14, para. 51.

86. ANM2005/0018534, Conference of Executive Secretaries [of SWECS], held on May 3, 1956, Item 6. TNA: WO 216/901, DOO to Templer, March 15, 1956. For instance, a near riot and accusations of women being visible semi-naked in search tents led to a report on food operations at Semenyih in 1956, see, for example, *Report on the Conduct of Food Searches at Semenyih in the Kajang district of Selangor* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1956).

87. ANM1957/0569642 SEP. See also Karl Hack, "Negotiating with the Malayan Communist Party, 1948–49," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39, no. 4 (November 2011), pp. 607–32.

88. Kumar Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda* (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 2002), p. 195.

89. Rhodes House, Oxford, *Granada End of Empire* television series, research notes with Guy Madoc.

90. Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda*, p. 197.

91. ANM2005/0018534, Note of a meeting of the Conference of Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of State War Executive Committees, November 28, 1955. Chaired by the DOO, this consisted mainly of the Menteri Besars, who were all Malay; the resident commissioners of Penang and Malacca, who were both European; and the British advisers, who were all European.

92. ANM 2005/0018533, War Executive Committees, List of Exec Secs of SWECs as of 1 July 1957, dated July 12, 1957. The others were three Malays (for Kelantan, Terengganu, and tiny Perlis) and one Chinese (for Penang).

93. DOO Review 1957, p. 14, para. 52.

94. *Federation of Malaya Annual Report 1957* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press), p. 4.

95. ANM 2005/0018534, Conference of Executive Secretaries [to SWECs], held on May 3, 1956, Item 4. Interestingly, at this point everyone at this conference—for example, military commanders and the state secretaries—was European.

96. DOO Review 1957, p. 23, para. 85–86. Comber, *Malaya's Secret Police*, p. 273.

97. Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation*, p. 231.

98. The reserve was organized as 28 Commonwealth Infantry Brigade from 1955, and continuing from then until 1971 based near Malacca in Malaya, and from 1971 to 1974 in Singapore as 28 ANZUK Infantry Brigade. AMDA negotiations were held up in 1957 first because the Malayans preferred to sign as an independent state, and secondly as there was British sensitivity about losing the British right to use nuclear weapons, which it wanted to have theoretically as a contribution to SEATO.

99. Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation*, pp. 226–31, summarizes the debates, and the British desire to be able to tell SEATO it could use Malayan-based aircraft as a nuclear-armed contribution to that organization's deterrent, alongside Tunku Abdul Rahman's need to tell some UMNO supporters there was no direct SEATO link following August 1957 press reports that nuclear weapons might be sent. British High Commissioner G. Tory reassured Malaya in September 1957 that Britain would not introduce nuclear weapons to Malaya or deliver them from Malayan bases without its prior agreement.

100. Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation*, pp. 146, 261. Malcolm Postgate, *Operation Firedog: Air Support in the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1960* (London: HMSO, 1992), pp. 137–38. By 1960, the RMAF still only had a handful of light aircraft.

101. The best work on propaganda and psychological warfare is Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda*. For a flavor of the propaganda leaflets, see Hack, "The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm," pp. 405–9, and Chin and Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng*, pp. 211–16. See also the various Malayan articles at http://www.psywar.org/articles.php.

102. DOO Review 1957, p. 17, gives 33,992. There was a peak of around 11,000 at any one time. The total figure may be too low, as the DOO figures for deportations at least look too low compared with more detailed Colonial Office figures.

103. DOO Review 1957, p. 17, underreports these. WO 291/1670, ORU (Far East) 1957/1, "A Comparative Study of the Emergencies in Kenya and Malaya," p. 33. This also shows detentions peaked at around 10,000 in 1949, fell to 2,171 in

1950 and then recovered to 8,719 in 1951 and 5,755 in 1952, before trailing off to 496 by 1956.

104. French, *The British Way in Counterinsurgency,* p. 81.

105. Karl Hack interviewed by Octavian Manea, "Setting the Record Straight on the Malayan Counterinsurgency Strategy," *Small Wars Journal,* http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/setting-the-record-straight-on-malayan-counterinsurgency-strategy.

CHAPTER 7

The Mau Mau Revolt in Kenya, 1952–56

Yannick Veilleux-Lepage and Jan Fedorowicz

INTRODUCTION

The Mau Mau rebellion confronted the British colonial authorities in Kenya with a complex array of challenges. Earlier policies to develop the country by promoting European settlement dispossessed native Kenyans (particularly the Kikuyu) from their traditional lands, leading them to move to the cities in search of work. Cities such as Nairobi grew at unsustainable rates, becoming centers of crime and recruiting grounds for increasingly organized and radical protests. The work of European Christian missionaries undermined traditional values and practices leading to further dislocation and conflict.

In all of this turmoil, a variety of local political programs emerged. Some sought to improve their lot by working within the framework of the colonial administration. Others began to formulate a solution that transcended any particular tribal, linguistic, or ethnic group and offered a vision for Kenya as a whole. Still others, like the Kikuyu people whose lands bore the brunt of European settlement, pursued a traditional tribal focus.

The original Kikuyu Central Association, founded in the 1920s, was disbanded for security reasons with the outbreak of World War II and was eventually replaced after the war by the more politically aggressive Kenyan African Union. At the same time, some 100,000 Kenyan veterans returned home from war service, no longer impressed by the mystique of the white man, more politically aware than their predecessors and facing the challenge of reintegrating back into society.

The intersection of these complex trends gave rise to what came to be known as the Mau Mau rebellion. Centered on the Kikuyu people and often directed as much against other Kenyan groups as against the British colonialists, resistance took ever more radical and violent forms in both the cities and the countryside. This expanding conflict left the colonial British administration with several specific challenges:

- The first was how to respond to the land pressures that had disrupted traditional livelihoods and forced the Kikuyu into the cities.
- The second was to differentiate between and respond effectively to two distinct types of resistance, one in the cities and one in the countryside.
- The third was to select and implement measures to identify and isolate the real threat, taking care not to push neutral parties into the arms of Mau Mau.
- The fourth was to find ways of extending thin security resources in a way that was effective in reducing the Mau Mau insurgency.
- The fifth was to make better use of intelligence as an asset in the campaign.

This chapter summarizes the way in which the colonial administration dealt with these challenges through a combination of applying prior experience and ongoing improvisation. Its responses were not always immediately successful, but the ultimate outcome was to defeat the Mau Mau rebellion and set the stage for a peaceful transition to the postcolonial era.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE MAU MAU REBELLION

The roots of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya lie in the agrarian crisis that challenged the Kikuyu people, one of 42 tribes or ethnic groupings inhabiting the country. Prior to the establishment of British colonial rule, the Kikuyu of central Kenya were involved in a significant southward expansion leading to the establishment of tribal customs and kinship obligations that regulated the occupation, ownership, and utilization of land.[1] Kikuyu political radicalization was a reaction to the severe pressure exerted on tribal lands with the coming of European colonists, who advanced claims over large swathes of Kikuyu land located in Kenya's central highlands. These settlers employed Kikuyu labor to tend the land, reducing the Kikuyu to the status of tenant farmers.

The history of European settlement in Kenya is inextricably linked with the development of the Uganda Railway. On July 1, 1895, Her Majesty's political agent and consul general in Zanzibar, A. H. Hardinge, accepted the transfer of coastal areas as well as the interior, which included Kikuyu lands. This came to be known as the Central Province of the Imperial British Africa Company.[2] In the same year, the British government began construction of the Kenya and Uganda Railway, which was to run from Lake Victoria, the headwaters of the Nile, to the port of Mombasa on the

Indian Ocean. Costing £6,500,000, this 582 mile-long railroad was to provide transport for military forces to the Nile and neighboring Uganda. Germany had colonies and military forces nearby in German East Africa, and it was feared that Germany might seek to interfere with the Nile, thereby threatening Egypt and the British hold over the Suez Canal—the main route to the colonies in India and the Far East.[3] Though this extreme scenario never materialized, the development of the railway did provide for the faster and more efficient colonization of Kenya.[4]

As construction proceeded, Kenya experienced a significant influx of Indian laborers, who constituted the bulk of the skilled workforce required to build the railway. Concurrently, to develop the colony so it would become financially self-sufficient and to create a settler economy to finance the railway, Charles Eliot, the governor of British East Africa, launched a campaign to attract British settlers to Kenya to take advantage of the rich agricultural potential of its pastoral lands. In doing so, he reserved the highlands for white settlers.[5] The most important step taken by the colonial government to enable European settlement in Kenya was the alienation of Kikuyu land. Before constructing the railway, the colonial government declared in 1892 that "the Land Acquisition Act allowed the administration to acquire land compulsorily for the railway."[6] Similarly, the Land Ordinance of 1902 enabled settlers to acquire land on a 99-year lease. In sum, these ordinances, and those that followed, gave the state the responsibility of doling out land to settlers as it saw fit. These powers regarding land distribution were further augmented by the 1915 Land Ordinance, which increased the length of land leases to Europeans from 99 to 999 years, established native reserves, and empowered the governor to reduce the reserve lands as he deemed fit.[7] As European settlement continued, land that the Kikuyu had traditionally farmed or grazed was alienated for the use of British settlers. According to Carl Roseburg and John Nottingham, about 60,000 acres were alienated in the Kiambu-Limuru areas between 1903 and 1906, and by 1933, 109.5 square miles of prime, highly fertile Kikuyu land had been taken for European settlement.[8]

The strategy of ongoing reduction of reserve lands, as permitted by the 1915 Land Ordinance, was advocated by the settlers as an effective tool for inducing native laborers to seek their livelihood on European farms. The colonial officials also introduced taxation policies, such as the Hut Tax and the Poll Tax, to further create a pool of low-wage labor and to address the shortage of voluntary labor. During the colony's early days, the scarcity of manual labor for the settlers' farms represented one of the largest challenges to the establishment of a viable settler economy in Kenya. The primary source of labor was native labor in the form of squatters, who were allowed to live on or near the farms and who reaped some benefit from the land in exchange for their manual labor.[9] A squatter and

his family would be allowed to live on a white settler's farm, usually in a separated area, and was permitted to raise some crops and graze a limited number of livestock in exchange for work performed for the settler. The squatter system closely mirrored the sharecropper model, which the United States had implemented in the southern states following the Civil War.

In the 1940s, Kenya experienced great prosperity as a result of the rise in agricultural prices relating to the war in Europe. Concurrently, many male settlers left their settlements to serve in the armed forces overseas, thus leaving the squatters and peasants to their own devices in respect of crop production. During this period, the squatters were able to increase the return on their crops by selling to the British government. However, this situation changed drastically after the war, when squatter cultivation was limited to 2.5 acres per wife, and the number of livestock the natives were allowed to keep was also greatly reduced. Moreover, male squatters were forced to work at least 270 days per year, thereby restricting their ability to cultivate their own land.[10]

The postwar period saw an enormous influx of Kikuyu into the metropolitan centers such as Nairobi and Mombasa. In fact, between 1941 and 1948, the population of Nairobi grew at a rate of 17 percent per year. Faced with this influx and a subsequent increase in crime, new legislation sought to exercise tighter control over population flows and to increase the police presence. However, these initiatives had little impact, and by 1950, Kikuyu street gangs exercised a considerable amount of power on the streets of Nairobi. These street gangs would later help fuel the Mau Mau movement by providing a large pool of disenfranchised and displaced young men from which to draw recruits.[11]

Adding to native grievances were religious pressures from the Christian missionaries. The missionaries brought their own version of education and religion, and many Kikuyu converted to Christianity. The missionaries, however, were largely intolerant of Kikuyu traditions and saw these as conflicting with Christianity. Sons who became Christians were forbidden by the church from participating in "heathen" ceremonies important to their fathers.[12] Further, the missionaries condemned polygamy and other tribal traditions such as clitorectomy. Although the natives could find no prohibitions on these traditions in the Bible, this dichotomy provoked an identity crisis among many natives who felt neither fully Kikuyu nor fully Christian.[13]

THE ORIGINS OF THE MAU MAU INSURGENCY

Prior to World War I, there was virtually no organized political opposition to British colonization in Kenya. Kenyan political consciousness first manifested itself in Nairobi within two opposing groups. The

first, mostly composed of Kikuyu, opposed the colonial system but had no aims beyond pressing the colonial government about unfair wages. The second sought to work within the colonial system to advance the rights of native Kenyans. The British authorities naturally favored the second group, and the Kikuyu group collapsed and was eventually replaced by the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) in 1924. The KCA gained popularity among the Kikuyu people by combining its anticolonial message with ancient Kikuyu cultural practices, such as oathing (discussed later in this section). As many aspects of traditional Kikuyu life were based on verbal and religious oaths taken by individuals as a form of verbal covenant, the organization used the system of oathing to secure its members' loyalty.[14]

In 1940, the KCA was banned by the colonial government as a part of a strategy of wartime controls on African political activities. At that time, the organization claimed a membership of more than 7,000 individuals, with a considerably larger support base.[15] Once World War II ended, the justification for preventing black associations lapsed, and the British allowed a new organization to form. This one aspired to be a real political party, known as the Kenya African Union (KAU). The conclusion of World War II also saw nearly 100,000 Kenyan natives who had fought on behalf of the British released from service to begin new lives in Kenya. Brian Lapping points out that these Kenyan veterans had served side by side with British soldiers and "had seen for the first time [the British] as no more than equals."[16] This in turn "made them a dangerous, volatile group."[17] Unemployed and underemployed Kikuyu veterans in low-income areas now had the time and the inclination to listen to inflammatory anticolonial speeches from educated KAU leaders. Though it is uncertain whether the listeners fully appreciated the lofty concepts and ideals of equality, independence, labor rights, and African nationalism espoused by KAU leaders, they certainly grasped the sentiment. The message of stolen lands and European exploitation gave the Kikuyu a cause around which they could rally and express their discontent.[18]

Between 1944 and 1946, the KAU quickly built a membership of over 100,000 under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta. The majority within the KAU represented a moderate reform movement and a schism soon developed as the radical remnants of the KCA began pressing for more subversive action. In fact, the KAU was completely infiltrated by ex-members of the banned KCA, including the *Anake a forti,* the "Forty Group," composed of ex-Kenyan service members who returned to Nairobi after World War II to find themselves unemployed and in unacceptable living conditions.[19] For these individuals, and many others, the formal politics espoused by the KAU held little appeal. Instead, they found black market dealings and violence the only solution to their deteriorating situation. The underground leadership of the KCA subsequently altered its

recruitment strategy to become a viable mass movement. It is during these organizational transformations that the group known as Mau Mau first emerged. In fact, as early as 1948, the British colonial administration was awash in reports from both settlers and natives regarding the emergence of a new anticolonial movement. The director of Intelligence and Security of the colonial government confirmed the reports and even went as far as submitting his own, claiming that Mau Mau was related to the KCA.

The report identified Mau Mau as a militant movement thought to have been responsible for frequent agitation against colonial rule in the late 1940s. Its members were understood to take oaths of allegiance to each other.[20] The administration of oaths was aimed at overcoming the lack of coherence in the Mau Mau movement as well as the lack of a sense of nationalism or commitment to an ideology or religion, which traditionally gives unity to other insurgency and resistance movements. By incorporating Kikuyu tribal traditions, as the KCA had previously done, Mau Mau leaders attempted to create a sense of unity. In fact, although the political content of the Mau Mau's oath was relatively new, oaths had long been part of everyday life in the Mount Kenya region.[21] During the nineteenth century, oaths were used primarily to cement social and legal contracts between parties or to solidify future commitments, for example, in relation to land or marriage. However, in the years leading to the state of emergency, Kikuyu oathing was used to mobilize radical support and to warn against attempts to pass on information regarding their activities to the authorities. The tactical and pragmatic importance of oathing appears to have been lost on the colonial government, which could not see beyond the ritualistic superstition of the practice. The prevailing mysticism surrounding oathing, along with the fact that Mau Mau intentions remained fluid, added to the movement's image as being dark and irrational. It prompted the colonial administration to announce a ban on membership in Mau Mau in August 1950.[22]

As the British government identified oathing by militants as the root cause of the violence, the Kenya police and the provincial administration's tribal police attempted to disrupt oathing ceremonies and to arrest ringleaders. Despite this, the violence and disruptions perpetrated by Mau Mau continued, fuelled in part by the intransigence of both London and the almost exclusively European settler representation on Kenya's Legislative Council. As attacks on the homes of European settlers and Kikuyu loyalists grew, together with the symbolic mutilation of their cattle, British and local authorities began to hear reports that made reference to the activities of a secret Kikuyu organization called Mau Mau. Moreover, in February 1951, the extremist elements of the KAU seized control of the organization by removing the more moderate elements led by Jomo Kenyatta through the mechanism of a rigged election. Under its new

leadership, the KAU turned its attention to obtaining arms and supporters for what it saw as the eventual clash with the settlers. This clash would manifest itself in what would become the Kenyan emergency in 1952.[23]

From 1952 to early 1953, Mau Mau had not yet centralized its organizational framework and, as a consequence, its military and political efforts were effectively uncoordinated. Accordingly, "the result was seven months of random, intimidating violence and general confusion."[24] In fact, the disorganization was so acute that one Mau Mau leader, Waruhiu Iote, known as General China, was unaware of another large group of Mau Mau operating in another part of the country.[25] It has been argued that this failure on the part of Mau Mau to articulate a coherent end-state with attainable goals to their constituents contributed to their inability to mobilize the population, who came to hate and fear Mau Mau more than they did the British colonialists.[26] Nevertheless, the Mau Mau made a conscious effort to maintain the loyalty of adherents and supporters. Support for the active wing, the actual Mau Mau insurgents, was provided by the so-called passive wing made up of Kikuyu in villages, in native reserves, and in the countryside. They were nominally organized into groups of fewer than 10 people and were responsible for providing food, weapons, ammunition, and cash to operational Mau Mau members, who tended to work in small teams of 5–15 members.[27]

Though the number of attacks on the homes of European settlers and Kikuyu loyalists kept increasing, the governor of Kenya, Sir Philip Mitchell, who was only months away from retirement by early 1952, remained unwilling to curtail the rise in rural violence and demonstrated a particular obstinacy in refusing to tackle this growing problem.[28] In fact, even the colonial secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, corresponding with Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced that Sir Philip "did not take a very alarmist view of the situation on Kenya."[29] Four months after Mitchell's departure, London posted a new governor to Kenya, Sir Evelyn Baring, who quickly identified the danger of the situation. In fact, arson attacks against European settler properties were common, with over 60 incidents recorded between January and March 1952 around the town of Nyeri alone.[30] Settler farmers were not the only victims. Between August 1 and October 20, 1952, some 34 Africans were murdered, and this number included Chief Waruhiu, one of the strongest supporters of the British presence in Kenya.[31] On October 20, citing the existence of a "planned revolutionary movement" and in an effort to curb the mounting levels of rural violence and urban disquiet, Governor Baring declared a state of emergency.[32] This marked the beginning of a counterinsurgency campaign that received relatively little public attention in Britain. Few would have foreseen at the time that the campaign would soon include an attempt by the military to transfer lessons about combating asymmetrical warfare from one theatre of operations to another.

POLITICAL RESPONSE TO MAU MAU

As Governor Baring declared a state of emergency, the initial response to Mau Mau took the form of Operation *Jock Scott*, which was conducted by the police and the army and set the tone for future cooperation between them. Leading political figures associated with the militants, most controversially Jomo Kenyatta and other senior KAU office holders, were arrested in an effort to stifle Mau Mau momentum. The crackdown on suspected Mau Mau members was also extended to trade unions and nationalist movements in an attempt to cripple any solidarity from groups perceived to harbor anticolonial sentiment. Within three weeks of Governor Baring declaring a state of emergency, nearly 8,000 arrests had been made.

The day after the launch of Operation *Jock Scott*, Chief Nderi and two police escorts were murdered in Nyeri after they attempted to disrupt an oathing ceremony. A series of gruesome settler murders were committed in the months that followed. Settlers, in turn, responded by expelling large numbers of formerly loyal Kikuyu laborers from their farms. The systematic eviction of Kikuyu from areas where alleged Mau Mau crimes had occurred only became official policy on December 15, 1952, but the authorities did assist with evictions prior to this date. For example, following the murder of Commander Meiklejohn in Thomson's Falls, the Lancashire Fusiliers removed 750 Kikuyu men and 3,300 children during a sweep through the surrounding area.[33] By November 1952, the legal powers extended to magistrates to try Mau Mau offenses were strengthened by the creation of new regulations facilitating the seizure of property.[34] In December 1952, Governor Baring announced a new Emergency Tax levied against all Kikuyu, which proved extremely unpopular. Another action controversial among the Kikuyu population was the trial of the popular and respected political leader, Jomo Kenyatta, which began on December 3, 1952, and led to his conviction for leading Mau Mau.

The move to outlaw the anticolonial activities of large segments of both the Kikuyu and the wider nationalist population, along with the evictions of Kikuyu laborers, served to alienate ordinary Kikuyu and drove many toward supporting Mau Mau.[35] As a result of Operation *Jock Scott*, the 12,500 Mau Mau thought to be active combatants in 1952 soon grew to more than 100,000 within a year.[36] The fact that the colonial authorities estimated that up to 90 percent of the Kikuyu population of 1.5 million had taken Mau Mau oaths helps to make sense of the draconian, catch-all detention policy put forward by the colonial government. However, this population estimate was exaggerated and resulted in an unsubtle approach to distinguishing insurgents from the Kikuyu community from other Kenyans. In other words, the policy was flawed from the outset.

The emergency policy began to take on a more coherent shape after the arrival of General Sir George Erskine in June 1953. He was an able and politically aware professional soldier who as commander in chief of the military also exercised operational control over the police and auxiliary forces. In July 1953, the colonial government initiated a program of rehabilitation for former or captured Mau Mau. This process, informally dubbed the "pipeline," was intended as a "complete blueprint for winning the war against Mau Mau using socio-economic and civil reform."[37] Composed of some 100 detention camps, which eventually saw some 80,000 Kikuyu men and women passing through their gates, the process was designed to convert the Mau Mau insurgents into progressive and productive members of Kenyan society via a combination of reeducation and Christian theology.

The process of reeducating Mau Mau insurgents relied heavily on convincing the individuals in question that the colonial government had the Kikuyu's best interests in mind and that Mau Mau were in fact detrimental to Kikuyu society. The reform movement sought to convince the Kikuyu people that a much brighter future lay in supporting the government rather than supporting Mau Mau. The reeducation programs implemented in the detention camps focused on undermining revolutionary ideology. Similarly, Christian Kikuyu evangelists were permanently attached to detention camps for Mau Mau detainees. A detainee who wanted to reform was required to confess to actions perpetrated against the colonial government and the Kikuyu people: this confession would also be recorded. Additionally, the detainee would have to confess he had taken a Mau Mau oath and renounced previous beliefs. This process was often interspersed with unofficial "cleansing ceremonies," whereby authorities attempted to purge the influence of mystic seers and Mau Mau oaths from the detainees in rituals carried out by Kikuyu elders nicknamed, "Her Majesty's Witchdoctors."[38]

As was the case with the Emergency Regulations for Detained Persons of 1952, the rehabilitation policy was directly influenced by the much larger counterinsurgency campaign being fought simultaneously on the Malayan peninsula. In the months preceding the official rehabilitation policy announcement, Governor Baring turned to General Templer—the British high commissioner in Malaya appointed to deal with the Malayan emergency—for assistance and requested that he dispatch an officer from Malaya to advise him on the rehabilitation of Mau Mau detainees. Instead, however, because of the shortage of manpower in Malaya, Thomas Garrett Askwith, the commissioner for Community Development in Kenya, was sent to Malaya to tour the detention camps and rehabilitation centers. He was also briefed by Templer on the Malayan approach. Askwith's subsequent recommendations were to provide the substance of Kenya's official rehabilitation policy, most notably in its

emphasis on reeducation and the clear distinction made between the treatment of sympathizers and the treatment of insurgent fighters.

As part of this distinction, the pipeline operated a white-grey-black classification system: "whites" were cooperative detainees who were repatriated back to the reserves; "greys" had been oathed but were reasonably compliant and were moved down the pipeline to work camps in their own districts before being released; and "blacks" were the so-called hard core of Mau Mau. These individuals were moved up the pipeline to special detention camps. Thus, a detainee's position in the pipeline was a straightforward reflection of how cooperative supervisory personnel deemed them to be. Deeper historical research, however, has shown that such distinctions were arbitrary and that "cooperation" was defined in terms of a detainee's readiness to confess to his or her Mau Mau oath.

The incarceration and rehabilitation of tens of thousands of detainees dealt with only the most immediate and violent threat to the colonial order. What remained was the even more complex and, in the long run, more important issue of restoring the shattered political and economic structures of legitimate authority and effective control over the Kenyan peasantry. Completed in different places at different times throughout 1954, a radical program of social reform was initiated by the provincial administration in Central Province. Its focus was the construction of fortified villages, based on models developed in Malaya as part of the counterinsurgency program, in a process known as "villagization." As in Malaya, this program was designed to disrupt the activities of the insurgent supply network by breaking the links between guerrillas hiding in the forests and their supporters in the reserves. It also served to punish the disloyal population. Between June 1954 and October 1955, over 1 million Kikuyu were forcibly resettled into 854 villages.[39]

The villagization process proved to be a strategic success in terms of bringing the Kikuyu population under the control of the provincial administration and served to isolate the forest fighters from their bases of support and their ability to procure supplies. However, as the fighting began to subside, administrators increasingly came to see these villages as valuable resources for the reconstruction of Kikuyu society. Emphasis then shifted from punishment to the more positive function of using these villages for reconstructing Kikuyu society on a stable, three-class, basis consisting of the wealthy elite, a solid and numerically dominant peasant middle class, and a lower class of landless artisans and laborers.

The first installment of this process was based on the Swynnerton Plan of 1953 and called for the removal of structural obstacles to African agricultural production within the political economy of colonial Kenya. The basic tenet of this plan was that communal land ownership would be replaced with a land tenure system. This new system would encourage individuals to invest their own time and labor in improving the land that

would enable them to profit from their own work. The program was intended to combat Mau Mau insofar as land belonging to Mau Mau fighters or supporters would be seized and consolidated. This system was widely held to be a highly effective tool because seizure and loss of land was considered to be one of the most severe punishments that could be inflicted on a Kikuyu. The Swynnerton Plan assumed a "counter-revolutionary" function to further punish Mau Mau supporters and reward loyalists, thereby hastening the end of the emergency.

The implementation of the Swynnerton Plan was thus not only aimed at overhauling land use and tenure rights throughout Kenya, it also served to alleviate one of the primary grievances of the Kikuyu and thus undermined the appeal of Mau Mau. However, as noted by Andrew Mumford, the benefits of the land consolidation were overshadowed by other factors. First, the detention and rehabilitation process was characterized by widespread indifference to the detainee's welfare. This undoubtedly acted as a catalyst for relatives and friends of those interned. Second, the absence of impartial jurisprudence tainted political and legal efforts to counter Mau Mau. Between 1952 and 1958, over 3,000 Mau Mau suspects stood trial on charges related to the insurgency, and of these, some 1,090 would be hanged.

BRITISH MILITARY RESPONSE

The British Army's strategy against the Mau Mau insurgency was influenced by its experience of dealing with similar revolts in various parts of the empire during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. John Pimlott has observed that the relative success of the British Army against insurgency can in part be attributed to the experience gained from its "imperial past."[40] Many British soldiers who fought against the Mau Mau in Kenya were seasoned veterans of several colonial conflicts. During the early 1950s, the British Army was involved in operational theatres in Malaya, Korea, and Kenya, and it had only recently left Palestine. Moreover, officers and enlisted men with more than seven years of active service had also served in World War II. This strategic advantage would prove to be devastating to the Mau Mau, which was comparatively speaking largely unprepared to face such combat-experienced veterans.

Despite this strategic advantage, after the declaration of the state of emergency, it soon became apparent that the colonial government had no overall strategy for dealing with the revolt. Moreover, the initial military bulwark against the Mau Mau insurgency consisted of just three battalions of the King's African Rifles, a level of manpower equivalent to a third of the estimated Mau Mau forces. Faced with insufficient forces and lacking a clear strategy, military operations in the first months were quite seriously flawed. By late 1952, Mau Mau began forming clusters in

forest areas where they were able to pool resources. The Kenyan forests provided a base area for Mau Mau survival. The rugged countryside provided them with relative security from British operations.[41]

Faced with inadequate military resources at his disposal, Governor Baring requested the appointment of a director of operations whose role was envisaged to be similar to that performed by Briggs and then Templer in Malaya. The request was submitted in November and again in December 1952, but the War Office instead appointed Colonel G. Rimbault as personal staff officer, a position with limited authority.[42] This appointment reflected the failure on the part of the War Office to appreciate the seriousness of the Kenyan situation. This failure was evident again when the reluctance to send in more British battalions led to the further overstretching of the colonial troops. On January 6, 1953, British sweeping operations pushed into the forests for the first time. After declaring the northern Aberdare Mountains area prohibited to all civilians, the army and police launched Operation *Blitz*. In these "prohibited areas," troops could open fire without warning. The operation was, however, confined to the forest fringe and the Mau Mau avoided security forces by moving deeper into the dense forest. Still suffering from manpower shortages, the security forces were limited in their ability to launch offensives because of the constant demands for protection of the settlers.

One solution to the manpower problem appeared to be the creation of Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru Home Guard units, some of which existed in an unofficial capacity before the emergency was declared. By March 1953, there were 18,000 Home Guards in Central Province,[43] a force that was central to the British counterinsurgency strategy. The nature of the Home Guards changed as the campaign continued. They were originally formed to patrol localities, guard schools, escort chiefs and headmen, act as guides for the military, and participate in screenings. They normally operated exclusively within the reserves, leaving the forests to the police and the army. As the struggle against the Mau Mau escalated, the intelligence gained from Home Guard personnel proved invaluable, and they helped ensure that Mau Mau influence would not take hold in untouched areas or even in areas where potential recruits might exist. Mirroring somewhat the Strategic Hamlet program implemented by the U.S. Army in Vietnam, the Home Guards limited the Mau Mau's ability to intimidate and recruit from the local population. The Home Guards outnumbered Mau Mau insurgents and acted as security forces in Kikuyu villages. As with the Strategic Hamlet program, this greatly increased the power of the Home Guards and curtailed Mau Mau influence in these areas.

In February 1953, important changes were made to the command and control structure in Kenya. The chief of Imperial General Staff (CIGS), General Sir John Harding, partially relented in his response to Governor Baring's demands and appointed Major General William Hinde as chief

staff officer to the governor. Upon his arrival, General Hinde spent a month touring the affected areas to draw up recommendations for combating the insurgency. General Hinde elected to maintain an emphasis on policing to uphold law and order, with the military only fulfilling an auxiliary role. He continued this approach even as Mau Mau violence escalated—a problem compounded by poor intelligence and an as-yet unclear counterinsurgency strategy. He optimistically believed that the Mau Mau could be beaten with existing resources; however, faced with claims of Hinde's lackluster approach to the campaign, the CIGS itself intervened to increase British military strength in Kenya by two brigades and two additional battalions, raising the British military presence to some 10,000 troops.

Two events on the night of March 26, 1953, dramatically escalated the conflict. The Mau Mau attacked Lari village and the Naivasha police station almost simultaneously. At Lari, the Mau Mau massacred 120 civilians, while in the raid at Naivasha they released prisoners and stole arms and ammunition, thereby embarrassing the colonial government. Lari represented the beginning of an assault on the Home Guards aimed at discouraging loyalism. These events forced the authorities to realize that the Mau Mau was a serious and organized movement that would not quickly fade away. Following the Lari and Naivasha attacks, there was rising criticism of Hinde's handling of the campaign, particularly from the European settler community who felt exposed to the increase in violence by his perceived intransigence. This reached a crescendo in the spring of 1953, when he was replaced in May by Lieutenant General Sir George Erskine.

Erskine's appointment signifies the moment when the British started to take the Mau Mau insurgency seriously. The growing urgency was also reflected in the decision to upgrade Erskine's role to general officer commanding of the East Africa Command. Erskine built on Hinde's prohibited area policy and instituted a one-mile forbidden strip along the edges of heavily forested eras. This one-mile strip was intended to interrupt the flow of food supplies into the forest and to allow security forces to monitor movements between the reserves and the forest. In addition to building on the policies instigated by Hinde, Erskine identified two main operational deficiencies within the British forces in Kenya. The first was "the absence of an offensive spirit," and the second was ambiguity in "the decision as to which areas should be given military treatment."[44] Erskine would attempt to remedy this situation by dividing the army into three "striking forces" organized to tackle particular Mau Mau strongholds.

To increase the offensive nature of engagements, Erskine deployed the 39th Brigade and RAF aircraft in Aberdare. The army sustained almost continuous attacks throughout June and July, although these offensives

appeared to improve loyalist morale and civil-military cooperation. As a response to these intense actions, Erskine called for extra troops to escalate the offensive and for the implementation of a new tactic to strike at the insurgents hidden within the deep forest. By August 10, five tracks were constructed into the forest, each with a military encampment at the end, allowing for deep penetration into enemy territory. Subsequently, Erskine ordered a further 20 tracks be constructed. Using these tracks, the army launched large-scale forest operations from July to August, followed by lower-profile interventions, such as small patrols, pursuing food denial measures and attempting to deny the Mau Mau control of the reserves. At the same time, the police and administration strengthened their positions.

Erskine's appointment also reversed the previous military tendency to ignore the successful lessons of the Malayan campaign. Citing the Malayan model as his inspiration for a restructuring of the command structure in Kenya, Erskine appointed Hinde as his deputy director of Operations and General Cameron as deputy commander in chief for the rest of the East African theatre. He also established Malaya-style civil-military committees.[45] At the national level, a War Cabinet was created consisting of the four most senior civil-military leaders: the governor, the deputy governor, the commander in chief, and the minister without portfolio. Beneath the War Cabinet sat an Emergency Joint Staff that dealt with more operational matters and was composed of the leadership from the colony's police, army, and civil service. Decentralization was followed and, as in Malaya, Provincial and District Emergency Committees were formed consisting of local police, army, and political leaders. These organization reforms were vital for the next stage in the offensive, which demanded far more effective cooperation.

Perhaps the most overt display of the military lessons percolating the Kenyan campaign was the publication of the 1954 *Handbook of Anti-Mau Mau Operations*, which was distributed to officers in Kenya. This manual borrowed the wording and the operational premises of its Malayan precursor, the *Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya (ATOM) Manual*, and demonstrated the colonial government's clear intention to transfer tactical and operational lessons from Malaya into Kenya. In fact, as Andrew Mumford points out, "Erskine sent a telegram to the Commander-in-Chief of the Far East Land Force acknowledging that the ATOM Manual 'has been much used as a basis for [training] in anti-Mau Mau operations. All available copies have been passed to the units concerned. . . .' "[46]

Despite attempts to transpose the lessons learned from the Malayan emergency, these remain entirely different campaigns. For example, military operations in Kenya were carried out on a scale not seen in Malaya. More specifically, these operations were undertaken in both urban and rural environments, a scenario very different from that in Malaya.

The Mau Mau insurgency was characterized by the presence of a radicalized and organized urban segment of the insurgency, which contrasted with the disparate groups hiding in the forests. Mau Mau's strength in Nairobi demanded a proportionately powerful response by the colonial authorities. Earlier urban counterinsurgency tactics had been ineffective and far too localized to have any real and lasting impact on the larger conduct of the campaign. In an attempt to neutralize Mau Mau's ability to conduct operations in an urban setting, the colonial military together with political authorities launched Operation *Anvil*. On April 24, 1954, the security forces sealed every road, track, and path in and out of Nairobi. No Africans were allowed to pass the checkpoints, and the city was closed for the next month as five British battalions, one KAR battalion, 300 police, hundreds of Home Guards, and numerous Kenya Police Reserve officers systematically searched every area of the city. The operation was the largest urban cordon-and-search operation ever undertaken by the British military up to that point.[47] For a month, the Nairobi Kikuyu population of approximately 50,000 were systematically screened, 24,100 were detained, and a further 6,150 were repatriated to the Central Province.[48] In sum, more than half of the city's largest ethnic group was removed in a period of four weeks, which had profound effects on Nairobi's social fabric, its economic stability, and the course of the campaign itself.

On a social and ethnic level, the indiscriminate nature of the British round-up conveyed the lack of subtlety in the British approach to the various African ethnic groups.[49] The screening teams enjoyed absolute power and worked to a quota rather than making informed decisions about a person's subversive attributes.[50] Inevitably, and bearing in mind the size of the operation, flawed intelligence, the ambiguity of allegiances among the population and the inability of the colonial authorities to successfully differentiate between friend and foe, meant that many loyalists were caught in Anvil's net, thus endangering their widespread antipathy toward Mau Mau.[51] However, from a military perspective, Operation *Anvil* marked a major turning point in the campaign. Mau Mau supplies, as well as its command and control structure, and its recruitment capabilities in Nairobi were severely disrupted and never fully recovered.[52] However, this success came at the price of alienating large swathes of the originally anti-insurgent indigenous population. According to Mumford, "the un-nuanced nature of Operation Anvil, the first major post-war urban counter-insurgency operation undertaken by the British Army, puts future urban operations conducted in Yemen and particularly Northern Ireland into context and helps develop a lineage for the British approach to urban campaigning in a low-intensity conflict environment."[53]

Following Operation *Anvil*, gang activity in Nairobi dramatically declined, although large numbers of Mau Mau still roamed the forests with virtual impunity. In fact, support for Mau Mau actually surged in

Embu and Meru after large numbers of people were returned to the districts as a result of Operation *Anvil*.[54] With Nairobi maintained as a secure base, post-*Anvil* operations developed in three phases. Phase 1 started with the districts closest to the city—Kiambu, Fort Hall, and Thika. Phase 2, which took place from August to November 1954, focused on Nyeri and Embu. Phase 3 took place in Meru as well as the settled areas next to Mount Kenya and the Aberdare Mountains. The security situation improved in all of these areas by the end of 1954, with post-*Anvil* operations considered a military success.[55] To further increase the security of settler properties in the Rift Valley, the number of Farm Guards, a group similar to the Home Guards, was expanded, and British soldiers on leave sometimes spent a weekend or a couple of weeks at settler farms to discourage further attacks.[56] By the end of 1954, the combination of military operations and villagization had largely driven the Mau Mau out of the reserves, had inflicted heavy losses, and had prevented the Mau Mau from securing additional logistical support and reinforcements. The rebels found themselves mainly confined to the forests of the Aberdare Mountains and Mount Kenya.

As with the urban campaign, the forest campaign proved to be equally slow in reaching a level of operational effectiveness. Small-scale sweeps through the forest and foothills typified the rural military approach in the early years of the emergency. It was not until 1955, three years into the campaign, that two major forest operations took place signaling a shift in tactics. The first of these was Operation *Hammer*, which took place from mid-December 1954 until February 1955 in areas immediately adjoining the Aberdare Mountains. The second was Operation *First Flute*, from February to April 1955.

Operation *Hammer*, which complemented the urban-focused Operation *Anvil*, raised the level of the campaign in the forest area.[57] Capitalizing on improved road infrastructure in the Aberdare Mountains, British commanders led 10,000 troops through the forest region in a massive show of force with the aim of detaining up to 2,000 Mau Mau suspected of hiding there. The operation lasted more than a month, but it resulted in just 161 suspected insurgents killed, captured, or surrendered. General Erskine condemned the whole operation with faint praise: "I did not expect spectacular terrorist casualties, neither were they achieved."[58] While Operation *Hammer* was deemed a failure from an operational perspective, the military next attempted to reinvigorate the rural campaign with Operation *First Flute*. Using a similar number of troops as Operation *Hammer*, Operation *First Flute* was intended to engage a 3,000-strong insurgent group in the wider Mount Kenya area. Two months after the beginning of *First Flute*, 189 insurgents had been killed, 43 captured, and 45 had surrendered.[59] Andrew Mumford has argued that one of the most pertinent lessons of rural operations in Malaya, one that was not heeded

in Kenya, was that contact with insurgents takes time, patience, and endurance. In Kenya, operations that initially appear to be reaping little reward were called off. This was in contrast to the acceptance of operational longevity, as was done in Malaya. It can be explained by the colonial interpretation of "Mau Mau as an atavistic irritant and not a well-versed, well-disciplined, well-organised insurgent enemy."[60] As such, the expenditure of significant military resources on the rural campaign was not in keeping with the prevailing political view that Mau Mau constituted a mere nuisance, albeit a vicious one, that could be put down with ease. This embodies a discernibly rigid approach to counterinsurgency, as opposed to swift adaptation. The only real contribution to the rural campaign was the use of "pseudo gangs."

Pseudo gangs consisted of surrendered or captured Mau Mau enlisted by the colonial government to hunt down and kill or capture their former Mau Mau comrades. The notion of pseudo gangs was not unique to Kenya and, in fact, had been used in other counterinsurgency operations by the British. However, Kenya provides the most successful example of the employment of such gangs. The method was employed to a lesser extent in Malaya where Special Operation Volunteer Forces composed of captured and surrendered insurgents returned to the jungle to track down their former comrades. However, the use of the pseudo gangs in Kenya has historically received a great deal more attention than in previous conflicts, due in large part to the fact that it represents the most successful example of the employment of such gangs. Initially, reformed Mau Mau were used as trackers or guides for the British Army. They soon become essential for intelligence gathering and for bringing about "contact" with insurgent units in the forest. These early incarnations of pseudo gangs were composed of reformed Mau Mau, loyalist Kikuyu, and white soldiers working together to target Mau Mau leadership. Eventually, British soldiers were removed entirely, and the gangs operated with only minimal colonial supervision.

In June 1954, the pseudo-gang method was officially sanctioned by General Erskine, who strongly advocated the technique to the military hierarchy.[61] In May 1955, Erskine's successor as commander in chief, Lieutenant General Gerald Lathbury, attempted to increase the use of pseudo gangs by establishing five Special Forces teams, each consisting of 10 ex-insurgents commanded by a British officer, as a manifestation of his belief that pseudo gangs were "the most effective weapon against the terrorists."[62] As part of the effort to formalize the integration of pseudo gangs as a pillar of the counterinsurgency campaign, Frank Kitson, a field intelligence officer, established the Special Methods Training Centre in 1954 for the express purpose of professionalizing reformed Mau Mau insurgents into capable and reliable allies in the counterinsurgency campaign. According to Kitson, the process for persuading the Mau Mau to

operate in these gangs was to treat them harshly and "put them in their place" initially and then gradually to involve them in the pseudo community at the training center by treating them as friends. Once they could be trusted with performing sentry duty and carrying arms, they were taken on patrol.[63] Ian Henderson of the Special Branch wrote an account of his legendary pseudo-gang effort to track down senior Mau Mau leader Dedan Kimathi. He said that once they were surrendered or captured, former insurgents seem to resign themselves to cooperating with the pseudo gangs, fearful of retribution from their former comrades and of similar treatment at the hands of the authorities should they not prove helpful: "a hostile gang fighting against us yesterday became a tamed gang fighting for us today. We were not exactly converting these desperate men, but we were certainly recruiting them."[64]

By the end of 1956, the pseudo-gang technique was showing remarkable results in the Kiambu and Thika areas and played a pivotal role in hunting down Mau Mau leaders and members that were captured or killed, at an average of 20 per week.[65] The pseudo-gang concept worked extremely well, not only for targeting Mau Mau operatives, but also in intelligence gathering and counter-leadership targeting. In fact, pseudo gangs accounted for the capture of the vast majority of Mau Mau leaders. Leroy Thompson argued that the reason the pseudo-gang techniques worked so well in Kenya was because of poor command and control between Mau Mau groups, making it extremely difficult for the Mau Mau to tell friend from foe. Moreover, employing former guerrillas in pseudo gangs was a "propaganda coup for the government and an economic strategy for the army." The colonial government was able to successfully turn guerrilla against guerrilla, and with military and economic support from the British government, the outcome was predictable.[66]

Despite the strategic advantage of pseudo gangs, Andrew Mumford argues that the presence of pseudo gangs and Home Guards extended the intense brutality with which interrogations were undertaken, thus severely undermining the practical value of the "minimal force" doctrine.[67] The doctrine of minimal force was held as one of the central planks of success in Malaya, and as such it seemed natural that along with the breadth of tactical, operational, and strategic ideas that were gradually transferred from Malaya to Kenya in the mid-1950s, a concerted effort would and should have been to uphold and conform to this doctrine. However, it has been argued by Mumford that "only assessments of conduct in Northern Ireland match the Kenya case for indictments of widespread disregard for civilian rights."[68] Similarly, Thomas Mockaitis described the actions of the colonial government as being indicative of "the 'Black and Tan' phenomenon" at work in Kenya, given the excessive force employed by the security forces on suspected insurgents and their

purported supporters.[69] At the epicenter of this criticism lies the treatment of detainees in interrogation camps, the indiscriminate raids and roundups that failed to distinguish Mau Mau from innocent Kikuyu, and the widespread use of capital punishment. In short, the use of excessive force in contrast to the doctrine employed in Malaya perpetuated the cycle of violence and reduced the counterinsurgency campaign's base of support. This lesson, learned slowly by the British government as a whole, was arguably never put into practice in Kenya.[70] In fact, when Major General Hinde first arrived in Kenya, he cited minimum force as an essential component in operations conducted against Mau Mau: "We must heed the example of Malaya and ensure that repressive measures do not result in an unbridgeable gap of bitterness between us and the Kikuyu."[71] However, the prevailing climate of fear led to rampant beatings, torture, and killing by British armed forces and, to a great extent, the Kikuyu Home Guards which ensured that, in Huw Bennet's words, "Fear became a strategic level for combating the insurgency."[72]

INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING RESPONSE

As early as 1950, when Mau Mau first emerged, the British had begun monitoring the group and attempted to infiltrate it to gather intelligence on its aims, its membership, and its strategic intentions. This intelligence did partially assist in the execution of Operation *Jock Scott*. However, the arrest and trial of high-profile nationalist and trade union leaders who at best had an ambiguous relation to Mau Mau demonstrates how inadequate the intelligence penetration of the group had been.[73] As argued by Randall Heather, the intelligence agencies in Kenya were "woefully unprepared" to face an insurgency: the colonial intelligence structure was fragmented and its agencies were given little attention or resources by colonial administrators.[74] In fact, at the outbreak of the emergency, Kenyan Special Branch consisted of just four colonial officers and very few African rank and file, none of whom were operational in areas dominated by the Kikuyu.[75]

Faced with the pre- and early emergency intelligence failings, newly arrived Governor Sir Evelyn Baring acknowledged the need for fundamental restructuring. In November 1952, Sir Percy Sillitoe, the director general of MI5, recommended the reorganization of the Kenyan intelligence apparatus. Sillitoe's report proposed changes that would bring Kenya in line with the Malayan intelligence system.[76] A national Intelligence Committee was established to centralize collection and analysis, to be chaired by an intelligence advisor and attended by the assistant chief secretary, the assistant commissioner for Special Branch, the Security Liaison Office from MI5, and representatives of the Chief Native Commissioner.[77] This committee reported directly to the governor. Although

Sillitoe's plan of action was heeded, it took some time before any changes were implemented, and even longer before any benefits materialized.[78] Randall Heather has argued that two factors prevented the Kenyan intelligence authorities from learning from the lessons of Malaya in the early stages of the emergency. First, there was a pervasive belief within the colony's political elite that Mau Mau would be defeated quickly and, therefore, did not require intensive intelligence work. Second, there was a desire emanating from London that Kenya was to be treated differently from Malaya and that comparisons between the two conflicts were politically undesirable.[79]

In the early 1953, the intelligence committees were organized according to district and provincial levels. The provincial and district committees included the administration, the police, the Special Branch, and the army to provide a consensus view on a given situation. The Special Branch officer would carry out most of the work as he employed the appropriate staff. As such, these committees served only to disseminate police and Special Branch intelligence and failed to actually address the shortfall in military intelligence that would lead to "contact" with insurgent units, despite the appointment of 52 field intelligence officers in early 1954.[80] To bridge this intelligence gap, Joint Army-Police Operational Intelligence Teams (JAPOITs) were formed in and around Mau Mau strongholds. Moreover, the intelligence gap was also partly filled by the use of the aforementioned pseudo-gang operations. Although these steps represented an improvement over the pre-emergency situation, intelligence collection still remained focused on the political rather than military activities of Mau Mau. However, as the insurgent violence intensified, the need for operational intelligence increased, and the Kenyan intelligence structure continued to be plagued by a lack of cooperation between the military and Special Branch. Noticing this failure, Lieutenant General Lathbury allocated military intelligence officers to Special Branch and ensured that the director of Intelligence Service had to report directly to the director of operations. These reforms were only put in place three years into the emergency, but once in effect, they brought a belated coherence to the process. Frank Kitson, who had previously established the Special Methods Training Centre, noted that the development of actionable intelligence was the most important objective in fighting an insurgency. He believed that the "main tactical job of the company commander" was to gather and synthesize available information.[81] Intelligence was critical to the conduct of a successful counterinsurgency, and those fighting Mau Mau accordingly employed aggressive interrogation techniques to gain information. Senior British officers, interviewed by RAND in 1962, made it clear that intelligence consisted of far more than what was gathered by trained interrogators and from the known insurgents themselves. In fact, both colonels interviewed, John R. Shirley and

Frank Kitson, advocated the gathering and synthesizing of masses of low-level data provided by a large number of low-grade sources. Though this data would require processing, and much of it would be of dubious reliability, in the aggregate it would provide a "mosaic in which the patterns of the enemy activities become discernible."[82]

The "first intelligence breakthrough of the war" was the capture, arrest, and interrogation of senior Mau Mau leader Warihiu Itote in January 1954.[83] Ian Henderson, a Special Branch officer with a deep knowledge of Kikuyu language and culture—also one of the pioneers of the pseudo-gang technique—interrogated Itote at length, producing an invaluable 44-page report. The report detailed the Mount Kenya Mau Mau's order of battle, manpower strength, armaments, and objectives. Assessed against other evidence, the interrogation of Itote showed rising popular support for Mau Mau during the preceding four months. Henderson recognized that the prospects of a mass surrender were limited unless additional pressure could be placed on Mau Mau militants. In a deal hatched by Henderson and approved by Governor Baring, Itote was spared the death sentence and agreed to cooperate with colonial authorities. In early February 1953, Baring received British cabinet approval for using Itote as a conduit for establishing top secret discussions with the insurgent leadership.[84] Itote sent 26 letters to senior Mau Mau leaders, imploring them to surrender and explaining the fair treatment he had received from the colonial government.[85] The objective of the Itote scheme was to bring the emergency to a quick end by offering to suspend the death penalty for those who surrendered voluntarily. By August 1953, only 66 Mau Mau had surrendered, while an additional 191 surrendered by June 1954.[86] Despite the initial failure of the Itote scheme, there were major Mau Mau surrenders in 1955 as the government tightened its grip on the insurgents through offensives and on Mau Mau supporters through villagization. These surrender offers, designed primarily to appeal to the reluctant, forced, or wavering insurgency, were approved by General Erskine "as 'a let out' to those who had been forced into Mau Mau against their will and had not committed any violent crimes."[87] They included a double amnesty, whereby surrendered Mau Mau and loyalists alike were immune from prosecution for all crimes committed before January 18, 1955. Following the announcement of the double amnesty surrender scheme, the director of information initiated a two-part campaign—far more extensive than any launched previously. The first part was aimed at informing all Kikuyu about the new terms. This operation succeeded, as many insurgents surrendering over the subsequent weeks carried the government's leaflets. The second phase, which lasted for the duration of the offer period, appealed to both loyalists and the passive wings in the reserves. A leaflet was distributed in the emergency areas and outlined the offer in English, Kikuyu, and Swahili but warned that

it would not remain open forever. The back of the leaflet was a "safe conduct pass" demanding fair treatment from the security forces for the bearer.[88] However, the amnesties angered the white community, because in John Lonsdale's words, they "thwarted the lust for revenge."[89] The settler community printed their own pamphlets in protests, threatening grim consequences for those who handed themselves in.[90] In the end, the double amnesty scheme succeeded in securing the surrender of 815 insurgents by January 1955, and they, in turn, offered an intelligence goldmine in terms of revealing the size, movements, and operational intentions of their former units.[91]

As is typical with successful counterinsurgency campaigns, the Mau Mau insurgency did not end with a formal surrender. Because there was no clear Mau Mau organizational structure to conduct a surrender, the end of the conflict was imprecise. Many agree, however, that the capture of Dedan Kimathi, the last major Mau Mau unit leader on October 21, 1956, symbolized the ultimate defeat of the Mau Mau and marked the end of the campaign.[92]

CONCLUSION

The Kenya emergency lasted almost exactly four years, from its proclamation in October 1952 to the capture of the last significant Mau Mau leader in October 1956. In describing the course of the emergency, this chapter has examined how the British colonial administration responded to the specific challenges raised by the insurgency.

The pressure on traditional tribal land was reduced through a conscious effort to move from traditional communal ownership to a system based on three distinct classes that promoted land tenure. Certainly, the villagization campaign sought to isolate Mau Mau and deny the rebels access to food and other resources, which, taking land away from the rebels, struck at the very core of their traditional values. It also worked to lay the foundation for a different system of land ownership, one in which the Kikuyu could maintain their ancestral domains.

As the rebellion evolved, it became clear that it consisted of two distinct elements. There was a rural campaign in which Mau Mau sheltered in the dense forests, a campaign that was familiar to the British because of their experiences in Malaya. The lessons of Malaya could be applied to that rural campaign relatively easily though not always exactly. On the other hand, there was also an urban campaign of resistance in cities such as Nairobi. In response, the British launched Operation *Anvil*, which isolated Nairobi for a month while security forces went through district by district, identifying those suspected of opposition. As a result, approximately half the city's Kikuyu population was either arrested or deported.

Such drastic measures risked alienating the Kikuyu in Nairobi: certainly support for Mau Mau subsequently rose in Embu and Meru. The net effect of the operation, however, was to reduce gang activity in the city and disrupt Mau Mau supplies and recruitment. *Anvil* was the single largest urban security operation in British history up to that point, but it was deemed an overall success and set the stage for subsequent similar operations in Aden and Northern Ireland.

A key challenge in combatting any insurgency is to differentiate between the enemy and everyone else, isolating opponents and securing the support or at least the acquiescence of the remaining population. In this case, the British were somewhat less effective. Drastic measures such as Operation *Anvil* pushed some hitherto neutral parties into the arms of Mau Mau. On the other hand, as the campaign progressed, the British became increasingly effective at denying food and resources to the insurgents. Resettlement and villagization played an important role as did taking land away from Mau Mau supporters and the construction of tracks into the dense forest where Mau Mau sheltered. In the end, cut off from their land and their base of support, Mau Mau withered and disappeared.

In pursuing its strategy, the colonial administration was confronted with the challenge of stretching its limited resources in a way that brought the battle home to the enemy. Initially, it emphasized rehabilitation and reintegration: convincing opponents that they faced a better future through collaboration with the government. It created Kenyan Home Guard units to supplement British troops and protect other groups. And the Imperial General Staff did dispatch additional units to Kenya to strengthen the overall effort.

Ultimately, however, the problem of limited resources was most effectively addressed through the use of the pseudo gangs that proved remarkably effective in turning former opponents into active combatants in the fight against Mau Mau. Deployment of the pseudo gangs signaled the end of an earlier strategy of minimal force and initiated a period in which the gangs were frequently accused of excessive brutality. Explaining what inducements were offered and why former Mau Mau supporters were willing to switch allegiances is an interesting question that deserves more study.

Finally, when the insurgency began, the colonial administration had extremely limited intelligence capabilities. When it became clear that the rebellion would not be defeated quickly, the entire intelligence effort was restructured by Sir Evelyn Baring. Additional officers were assigned, the collection and analysis of data was centralized though the network was extended out into the provinces and districts, collaboration was enhanced between intelligence, and in all the security services, including the pseudo gangs, a new emphasis was placed on gathering military intelligence, and there was an effort to aggregate low-level data to discern

bigger patterns in insurgent activity. Finally, when militant leaders were captured, they were offered amnesties in return for collaboration. Not only did this provide additional intelligence, but it provided an incentive for other militants to follow suit. Eventually, these measures began to have the desired effect in undermining Mau Mau.

Overall, the British were slow to recognize the seriousness of the insurgency and thus delayed in implementing effective responses. At the beginning, they appointed officials with insufficient authority to pursue the campaign effectively. Inadequate intelligence capabilities led to a misreading of local attitudes and conditions: for example, the colonial administration erroneously assumed that the Kikuyu-born Jomo Kenyatta was a Mau Mau supporter and was late in building on his Kenya-wide appeal. At the outset, many operations were called off prematurely if they did not yield immediate results. Limited resources were supplemented by local troops, and the urban-rural divide and tribal divisions were exploited, all of which had a longer-term effect on Kenya once it had achieved independence. On the other hand, the authorities did overcome their slow start, devised effective methods to limit the appeal of Mau Mau and isolate the insurgents, and eventually adopted an effective way of opening up tracks into the forests to attack the insurgents where they sheltered.

It is obvious that the colonial administration pursued several different strategies in parallel. It was the combination of many different threads that ultimately made the campaign successful. Some strategies were based on previous imperial experience. Some were derived from the contemporaneous Malayan emergency that occurred virtually at the same time, though the exact applicability of strategies that worked in Malaya to a totally different type of conflict remained questionable. And some responses, such as the use of pseudo gangs, were improvised on site. Overall, ongoing restructuring of the leadership eventually produced a centralized command better able to pursue a coherent and coordinated strategy.

The Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya is an example of the conflicts that inevitably accompanied the winding down of the colonial era. It occurred in a situation already fraught with complex struggles over land, economic development, social status, and political representation—struggles involving a bewildering kaleidoscope of local tribes, white settlers, imported Indian laborers, veterans of the colonial service, and the Colonial Office in London.

Exhausted by World War II and assailed by rising challenges throughout the empire, the United Kingdom had limited resources to devote to Kenya: that may be one reason that it initially preferred to minimize the Mau Mau threat and delayed dispatching a more robust response.

Beyond that, however, was a more fundamental cost-benefit calculation: just how much would be required to maintain order and would the effort be worth it? There was, of course, a general sense of obligation to the white settlers who had originally been encouraged to invest in Kenyan agriculture and to the native Kenyans for which Britain had assumed responsibility. Clearly, the first priority was to restore security, though at an acceptable cost. As the 1950s progressed, however, it had to be clear to most that there was no return to earlier colonial arrangements. The pressures for change from a variety of other African independence movements were simply too powerful to ignore, and the overriding emergent hope was for an orderly transition to the new era.

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CHAPTER 8

Breaking the Camel's Back: The Departure from the Philosophy of Cultured Force—The French Counterinsurgency Campaign in Algeria, 1954–62

Peter McCutcheon

> I never was, and still am not, favourable to Africa; I think that Africa is a fatal present which the [Bourbon] Restoration has given us.[1]
>
> —Marshal Bugeaud, Speech to Chamber of Deputies, June 8, 1838

INTRODUCTION

Marshal Thomas Bugeaud's statement, coming 125 years before the end of France's debilitating and divisive mid-twentieth century counterinsurgency campaign in Algeria, proved prophetic. The campaign shared many of the characteristics of others conducted in the postwar "withdrawal from Empire" in that it was protracted, involved a multicultural and multiethnic mélange of forces, and was influenced by both internal and external factors. On one side, it was portrayed as a just war of liberation and ostensibly fueled by a belief in a wider purpose: in this case, pan-Arab nationalism rather than the great specter that was Communist expansionism. As ever, the Clausewitzian center of gravity was a largely indigenous population, but in the case of Algeria one critical factor was to govern the degree to which all players engaged in, and with, the insurgency: Algeria was not an adjacent colony, Algeria *was* France. While the

demographic, economic, and cultural indicators seem, at first pass, to suggest that one might be justified in considering this a convenient fiction, to do so would be to dismiss the passion this condition aroused on both sides of the Mediterranean and the fundamental impact it had upon the nature of the conflict. Thus, those countering the insurgency, and especially those elements of the French military who were directly engaged, were not fighting to retain a colony; they were fighting on home soil to retain three *départements* of France.

Estimates of the cost of the Algerian War, both human and financial, vary considerably, but the Algerian Constitution of 1963 records the losses at 1.5-million victims: 500,000 killed or disappeared and 1 million wounded or injured. These figures include losses incurred in the immediate postwar blood-letting, but French sources quote French military losses as being 24,614, of which 15,583 were directly attributable to fighting or terrorist attacks. To this must be added 450 French soldiers who were taken prisoner and never accounted for as well as 64,985 wounded. Civilian losses were assessed in 1962 as being 2,788 French and 16,378 Algerians killed and 7,541 French and 13,619 Algerians injured. The civilian "disappeared" totals were given as 375 and 18,296 respectively. These figures do not include those French killed or wounded after the cease-fire, which the French government assessed as being 3,018. French sources show their security forces inflicting in the order of 141,000 losses on the insurgents. Research by Meynier suggests that between 35,000 and 65,000 Algerian civilian casualties were killed or injured during French military operations.[2]

This critical battle came at a time when France was in political turmoil, again plagued by what many deemed an unworkable and inefficient constitution. To this political instability was added a frustrated and recently defeated army, which deemed itself to have been betrayed in Indochina by its own government and France's allies. The internal divisions within the army were already deeply entrenched, but these tensions were to be exacerbated when the professional, non-metropolitan (that is, mainland French) core that was La Coloniale, La Legion, and l'Armée d'Afrique was required to absorb *Le Contingent*, predominantly reluctant conscripts sent to Algeria to participate in what, to them, looked suspiciously like a colonial war. This reinforcement moved the character of the army in Algeria from an all-professional cadre to an army that reflected the politics and concerns of the wider nation. These often ran counter to those commanding in Algeria. The result was an army that felt increasingly disengaged from its political masters and became increasingly parochial and self-serving in its outlook. It was within the constraints of this complex and contradictory environment that the French army was to fight a campaign, which, while delivering military success, was to ultimately founder on the rocks of political ineptitude.

In delivering military success, France's soldiers departed from a long tradition of playing a key role in the delivery of *la mission civilisatrice* through the use of "cultured force." In adopting the pragmatism that underpinned the new doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire*, French commanders, in the absence of clear political direction, opted instead for the tactic of brute force. This was met with uncompromising resistance from the insurgents and was to bring severe consequences as the army grew increasingly estranged from its masters and threatened to bridge from loyalty to rebellion. In short, the 1952–64 Algerian campaign was to become the straw that very nearly broke the back of the French army.

BUGEAUD AND "CULTURED FORCE"

Bugeaud's cautionary words were proof of the profound pragmatism that governed the approach of his generation of colonial soldier-administrators. As Singer and Landon suggest, he was reflecting the very real fear that Algeria would become France's new "ulcer," creating the same *engrenage*,[3] which had at first drawn and then enmeshed Napoleon on the Iberian Peninsula some 20 years earlier. He spoke with authority, having served in Spain, winning a reputation as a very competent exponent of the art of counter-guerrilla warfare. His career saw him bridge from the upheaval of Revolutionary France, through the Napoleonic Wars (including Austerlitz and Waterloo), to the Restoration. Bugeaud and his generation, including philosophical fellow travelers such as Faideherbe, Lyautey, and Gallieni, represented a class of officers who were experienced, self-made colonial polymaths who were confident in their ability to stand astride the turbulent politico-military interface that governed French political and strategic thought. While very much within the French establishment, they also stood apart from it in terms of a strong adherence to their right to exercise independent action in the absence of clear direction. In fact, direction was often not sought to avoid the possibility of unwanted constraints. This generation embraced independence but did so within a clearly understood and deeply held set of core beliefs. France's *mission civilisatrice* would blend the commercial, social, and political imperatives driving colonialism to deliver benefits to both the colonizer and the colonized. Of course, resistance was to be expected, but the careful, considered, and efficient use of force would aid rather than constrain the wider aim. This was the essence of the philosophy of "cultured force": force used in support of a wider national strategic policy that was both coherent and sustainable. The military's role was one subjugated to an all-embracing political strategy.

Bugeaud was to oversee the golden period of French occupation of Algeria, pacifying the country during a protracted campaign. Promoted

to *Général du Brigade* in 1831 and taking a seat in the Chamber of Deputies in 1833, where he advocated an isolationist approach to foreign policy, he first arrived in Algeria to assume temporary command of a corps in 1836. He was required by a government and an army to reach back to his Peninsula counter-guerrilla experience to quell rebellion in the vast, relatively ungoverned space of the arid Algerian hinterland. Having winnowed out incompetents (including the ruthless Wellingtonian treatment of "whingers") who wrote home to well-connected contacts in the Métropole (mainland France), he retrained his army and delivered almost immediate success against the rebel forces led by the redoubtable and endurable Abd el-Kader. Recognizing the nature of the war he was fighting, Bugeaud accepted that it would be protracted and require a multi-strand approach. He was to stick rigidly to this concept, mixing a paternalistic approach to those who submitted with an unremitting ruthlessness with those who did not. He returned to Algeria in February 1841, having been assigned the post of governor general. Bugeaud grew the colonial forces from some 63,000 in 1841 to a force that was to total over 100,000 by the time France had brought el-Kader to heel in November 1845. The campaign was protracted in both military and political terms and often saw Bugeaud at odds with Paris and the growing European settler presence who were themselves at odds with the indigenous population. He resigned in May 1847, frustrated by the government's unwillingness to pay the military costs associated with full security and their inability to understand the requirement for a realistic political settlement with the local population. In so doing, this competent, experienced soldier-administrator firmly placed his finger on the eternal Algerian challenge. There was much to attract the French, but there was a price to pay. That price could be mitigated by enlightened, pan-stakeholder policies, but the future development of Algeria, set against the backdrop of deep political instability, was to come very close to producing the very outcome that Bugeaud had predicted in 1838. Algeria was to become more than an "ulcer"; it was to develop into a disease that proved fatal to the Fourth Republic.

GENESIS OF THE INSURGENCY: ALGERIA PRIOR TO 1954

The fact that the French army delivered tactical and operational success but lost at the strategic level underscores the key requirement that any counterinsurgency operation must meet: that of providing the space within which an acceptable and enduring political solution can be established. The arbiter of that success is the population itself; thus, it is the population's fidelity that must be won and sustained. Those willing to challenge and then usurp the authority of those in government must,

in their turn, wrest the loyalty of the people away from that established authority. As in every counterinsurgency campaign, Algeria would be won or lost on the battleground that was the population. Therein lay the eternal problem. Like many other countries, the population of Algeria was not unitary in nature but rather a complex amalgam of tribes, ethnicities, and cultures. This complexity was the product of a range of historical, geographical, and religious factors upon which were overlaid domestic, national, regional, and international influences.

The pre-campaign history of Algeria serves to illustrate this complexity. Algeria post-Bugeaud was pacified but far from homogenous. France's Third Republic (1870–1940) affirmed the decision to adopt democratic secularism as the model for government but did not produce model government. The period of the Third Republic is best characterized as a series of unstable and ever-changing governments where the only aspect of continuity was the reappearance of the same faces in a seemingly endless series of administrations. The legacy of defeat in 1870 had created an inherent tension within France: isolationism coupled with colonialism produced a France that while outwardly confident was suffering a crisis of self-belief, which manifested itself most clearly in its foreign policy, especially toward an increasingly confident Germany. France was to win a pyrrhic victory in 1918, incurring a substantial demographic cost as well as a crippling economic deficit. These were to set the conditions for a turbulent internal political dialogue in the 1920s and 1930s. While the leftist-leaning Popular Front gained the ascendancy in the face of a rising threat from across the Rhine, core differences within and between political parties militated against the creation of a united front. A blend of prevarication and blind optimism led to the fall of France and the establishment of Petain's Vichy government. Algeria, prior to the Allied invasion of 1944, remained loyal to Vichy, but, as was to occur throughout France's empire, the clash between those who had supported Vichy and those who had followed de Gaulle, was to cause divisions within the political and military classes as well as within the wider population. The France that emerged under the Fourth Republic again held loyal to the principles of a parliamentary, liberal, and secular democracy, but while France had won the war, it was in danger of losing the peace. A confident *Parti Communiste Française* (PCF, French Communist Party) declared itself to be the postwar "moral" victors, pointing to the role played by the *Forces françaises d'intérieur* (FFI, French Forces in the Interior) during the occupation, but was unable to align its political narrative with that of the Socialists. Had it done so, it could have consolidated immediate postwar strengths[4] rather than lose ground to Georges Bidault's centrist *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP, People's Republican Movement) in the years following 1948. October 1946 saw the MRP's proposals for a new constitution, seeking to limit the power of the executive and also to replace the idea

of "empire" with "union" narrowly accepted by the nation.[5] The Fourth Republic was formally established on October 13, 1946, and ran until October 5, 1958, during which it mirrored many of the political failures of its predecessor.

Post-1945 policy regarding Algeria was informed by a combination of France's role in the Cold War and a determination to restore her position. This required a delicate balancing act in a bipolar world, with many elements of the French chattering classes and labor force tending to look East rather than West. France also needed to revive its postwar economy and looked to its colonial possessions to provide both motive power independent of American aid and status at global level. While Algeria did little to contribute to France's wealth in trade terms (its most important export being the 400,000 who labored in France),[6] it retained an important role in the psychology of the empire. The population of Algeria had reached 9.5 million, of which 8 million were Muslim, some three times larger than the population that Bugeaud pacified. Furthermore, the rate of growth indicated that it would double within 20 years. France continued to govern via the European, *colon*, minority who controlled every aspect of political and economic life. Algeria was more than a colony: it was part of the Métropole. The creation of three Algerian *départements*, enshrined in the 1848 constitution of the Third Republic, saw deputies returned to l'Assemblée Nationale exercising influence in the constant game of political musical chairs, while the political institutions within Algeria were built on an electoral system that saw 10 percent of the population hold more than 50 percent of the seats. This served to sustain and even reinforce inequality in all aspects of life from access to health care and education to the distribution of land. The number of Muslims in secondary education was less than 1 percent of the population, and there was one doctor for every 5,000 Muslims while access to health care for the European minority matched that of those in the Métropole.[7] Three quarters of the Muslim population lived a rural existence, either laboring for European farmers or conducting subsistence-level farming. The *colons* concentrated on the Mediterranean littoral, clustering in the key cities and towns. What Bugeaud had feared had become reality: Algeria was politically and economically divided. To this must be added the fact that events during World War II had made it clear to many of the colonized that their colonial masters had clay feet: they could be beaten. The myth of invincibility created by Bugeaud's pacification had been shattered. Many of those who had been conscripted to fight in France's name—be it Vichy France or Free France—returned home with a more cosmopolitan view and a growing belief that they had a right to a meaningful stake in their country. To fail to recognize and cater for these views was to bring the validity of the concept of "Algérie française" into question. Critically, a blinkered and self-serving *colon* community failed to recognize that

simple reality. To this must be added a Métropole population that had more immediate concerns and a centrist-left political class that focused upon those concerns rather than looking south. The failure of the social contract in Algeria was now inevitable. A direct consequence was the formation of the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN, National Liberation Front) on October 10, 1954.

THE WAR

Phase 1: A Failure to Snuff Out Insurgency (1954–55)

Those searching for a date for the formal launching of war consider it to be the call for a general, pan-Algeria insurrection on All Saints' Day (*Toussaint*), November 1, 1954. The call, broadcast by Radio Cairo and reflecting the need to consider Nasser's wider, pan-Arab Nationalist context, coincided with a series of small-scale attacks across Algeria, but mainly focused in the Constantine *département* and utilizing a traditional bastion of defiance, the Aurès Mountains, home to the Chaouin, as a springboard. Small groups belonging to the FLN's military wing, the *Armée de Libération Nationale* (ALN, National Liberation Army), probably numbering no more than 300 in total, slipped across the border from safe havens in Morocco and Tunisia to join a core of between 500 and 1,000 insurgents. Despite the retrospective titling of the initial 70 attacks as "Toussaint Rouge" (Bloody Toussaint), the initial attempt to raise rebellion was a failure, due to a combination of political apathy and insufficient military, political, and logistic preparation. The insurgents drew the correct conclusions and adopted a classic strategy, retreating to safe areas from which to build a secure base before attempting to propagate their message more widely. This process was far from straightforward. FLN/ALN ascendancy had only been achieved after a degree of infighting with other nationalist elements and highlighted an often unstated and concurrent aspect of many insurgency movements: debilitating and destabilizing internal strife. Nonetheless, there were grounds for hope. The insurgents had a clear narrative—an independent Islamic state marketed as the birthright of an oppressed majority—and considerable support from external sources. Their timing was also right. Postwar European empires were expensive to maintain and becoming increasingly difficult to sustain politically. The Atlantic Charter in 1941 had clearly messaged the United States' view on colonialism in a postwar world. The FLN and ALN were to spend the next 20 months establishing a presence within the population, cleverly balancing the need to service Muslim sensibilities with the need to establish networks and structures based on tried and tested Communist insurgent methodologies, including the elimination of pro-French community leaders. They were also required

to eradicate alternative options offered by other nationalist movements. In this, they were ruthlessly successful: the policy of *la valise ou le cercueil* (a suitcase or a coffin) may have been aimed at the *colons*, but the indigenous communities were required to make a similarly stark choice between collaboration, inaction, and resistance.

The French counter-reaction to the opening of the insurgency speaks volumes in terms of the state's lack of situational awareness and capacities. Prime Minister Pierre Mendes-France told the Assemblée Nationale on November 12 that, "the Algerian departments are part of the French Republic . . . between them and metropolitan France there can be no conceivable secession . . . *Ici, c'est la France*!"[8] The reality faced by General Paul de Cherrière, commander in chief in Algeria, was that he was ill-equipped to offer the civil authorities direct military aid. Although in command of some 54,000 troops on paper, most of them were not combat-ready. He estimated that he had in the order of 3,500 troops that he could deploy. Deploying them in an effective manner would have posed him considerable problems: his operational lift capacity was invested in eight aging, but still effective, Ju 52 transports and one helicopter.[9] Thus, initial moves were hesitant and misdirected. A lack of intelligence led the authorities in Algiers to focus on obvious targets in the absence of relevant ones. This reflex action was to aid, rather than hinder, the FLN as it focused on a sector of the political spectrum that, had it been correctly handled from the outset, may have provided a counter-weight to the FLN. Security forces conducted wide-scale arrests of more moderate and accessible nationalists based in urban areas. The French arrests focused on detaining members of the *Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques* (MTLD, Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties), the most vocal nationalist movement led by Messali Hadj. In so doing, they unwittingly assisted the FLN in their battle to take control of the more extreme nationalist groupings within Algeria. The French quickly realized that they had been fishing in the wrong pond and commenced operations focused at clearing the interior. By the end of the year, Paris had reinforced Algeria with 20,000 troops and 20 companies of riot police, representing one-third of the mainland force.[10] Early 1955 saw sweeps in the Aurès, which would serve to create and develop tactics, techniques, and procedures such as *ratissage*[11] and *accrochage*.[12] While conducting operations may have reassured the population to a degree and also accepting that the scale of the physical threat at that particular time was low, the French failed to appreciate the nature and potential scale of the insurgency they faced. They appeared psychologically and politically unwilling to elevate the problem beyond that of a police action. A local and low-level focus militated against a wider, coordinated, multiagency approach. The police led in the cities while army units were used in the interior.

The methodology adopted by the military saw *ratissage* and *accrochage* conducted in robust fashion with the near-inevitable result that local Arab and Berber communities, both urban and rural, were turned against the forces of government. Indiscriminate bombing of villages deemed to be pro-ALN were redolent with the overtones of the "Butcher and Bolt" tactics adopted by Britain when suppressing revolt in the Middle East in the 1920s. It is evident that commanders neither considered nor cared about the impact of second- or third-order effects. This was not the use of "cultured force" but rather "brute force." The use of terror as a weapon became embedded in the approaches taken by both sides. The classic insurgency model sees insurgent forces using terror as a tool to compel an ambivalent population to provide basic life support and to suborn or remove local representatives of French authority. The ALN firmly embraced this approach, paralleling those who had confronted the French in Indochina with such success. French forces chose to embrace, rather than reject, terror, using it to both suppress dissent and gain information. It was here that an early opportunity to win the loyalty of sections of a largely ambivalent but frightened population was missed in favor of perceived efficiency. By the summer of 1955, an impasse had been reached. Both sides lacked the mass and the infrastructure to advance their cause. To this impasse was added a very manifest lack of concern among the majority of *colons* on the Algerian coastline and the population of the Métropole to their north. The perceived threat and the actual level of violence appeared not to merit greater effort. This institutionalized arrogance guaranteed a failure to snuff out a nascent, and very controllable, threat before it gained traction.

At this juncture, it is worth briefly considering the effect of geography and demographics upon the command and control structures used by both sides. The physical geography and consequent distribution of the population led the insurgents to adopt a structure based on six *wilayas* or military regions. Three wilayas reflected the impact of the move from the coastal plain to the mountainous regions in the hinterland. Moving from east to west, Wilaya 1 (Aurès) abutted the Tunisian frontier and was populated by the strongly independent Chaouin who cared as little for those who lived on the coast as they did for their colonial masters. In this, the parallels with Afghan tribesmen are striking: invaders come and must be endured before they go. Wilaya 6 (Sahara), which lay between the coastal mountains and the Sahara, gave way to Wilaya 5 (Oranais), which abutted the Moroccan frontier. These three wilayas formed the "rear area," providing the required relatively "ungoverned" space and access to borders through which supplies and men could be introduced into the operational theatre. Again, moving from east to west, three wilayas lay between the mountains and the coast, encompassing the far more densely populated littoral. Wilaya 2 (Constantine) covered

Constantine and its surrounding area, Wilaya 3 covered Kabylia, while Wilaya 4 (Algérois) covered Algiers and its immediate environs. To these must be added the Zone Autonome d'Alger (ZAA), reflecting the critical importance of establishing and maintaining a presence in the capital. The Battle of Algiers would be fought to destroy the structure and capability of the ALN in the ZAA.

The French army's dispositions reflected their heritage rather than any perceived need to match the Wilaya system, but in several key areas it copied it. Algeria formed the 10th Military Region of France and contained three Corps d'Armée, covering the littoral and immediate hinterland. The fourth region within Algeria was the Sahara that had long been under military control. It is not considered further. The three corps-sized formations were based in Algiers, Constantine, and Oran, respectively, and carried titles that reflected this. It will be noted that these broadly matched the three northern wilayas, conforming to the same demographic, economic, and geographic drivers that had shaped the insurgents' thinking. Each corps area was divided into areas of responsibilities to which divisional-level groupings were assigned. The majority of the divisions employed were light divisions, but Oran had an armored division (5^{e} DB) under its command while Constantine commanded a motorized infantry division (2^{e} DIMot) and, initially, an air-portable division although 25^{e} DIAP would later convert to a parachute formation becoming 25^{e} DP, joining 7^{e} DI and 10^{e} DP in the General Reserve.

Phase 2: Mass, Innovation, and Propagation (1955–56)

The Philippeville massacre of August 20, 1955, in which 71 Europeans were murdered, marked a switch to a more aggressive and confident insurgent campaign. The military reaction was swift and ruthless. Estimates of those killed in the retaliation vary according to the political leanings of the source. French government figures suggest 1,273 insurgents were killed, while the FLN claim that the figure may be as high as 12,000.[13] Events at Philippeville presented a challenge of a hitherto unprecedented scale and invited a strong counter-reaction. Clearly, elements of the FLN/ALN now felt ready to weather the storm that would follow. Critically, Governor General Jacques Soustelle,[14] who visited the scene of the massacre, was to adopt a far less liberal approach thereafter. The French government, forced to focus on Algeria, used the withdrawal from Indochina to bring in the men of the *Corps expéditionnaire français en extreme orient* (CEFEO, French Far-Eastern Expeditionary Corps), combat-experienced professional forces who had years of counterinsurgency experience. The granting of independence to Morocco and Tunisia, while perhaps signposting a desire to withdraw from empire, also freed up more troops for Algeria. The final tool by which military mass was

achieved was the decision to deploy French conscripts from the mainland into Algeria. By early 1956, France had massed some 300,000 troops in Algeria. Bugeaud had achieved the pacification of Algeria with around a third of that number. Instrumental in achieving these force ratios was the use of indigenous forces. The use of French-officered auxiliary forces (*harkis*) reflected a traditional method for generating mass and gaining local knowledge. Almost 20,000 *harkis* volunteered with another 40,000 being conscripted. By 1959, some 200,000 *harkis* were actively engaged in counterinsurgency.[15] These men were to pay a terrible price when France abandoned them at the end of the campaign.

The French "design for operations" reflected many tried and tested methodologies. While the developing philosophy of *guerre révolutionnaire* was to influence operations, especially in urban areas, French thinking was driven by the well-understood requirement to secure the population and centers of population before addressing the need to defeat the insurgent in his safe havens. It would be wrong to form the view that the "oil-spot" strategy that had served Bugeaud and Lyautey so well was jettisoned wholesale. Nonetheless, the French, and those with Indochinese experience in particular, married the traditional with the innovative. The developing counterinsurgency theories of Colonel Roger Trinquier[16] were embraced where it was deemed efficient to do so. Trinquier, who was to later command 3^{e} *Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes* (3^{e} REP, 3rd Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment) during the Challe Offensive, successfully lobbied for his approach, *la guerre moderne*, to be adopted by 10^{e} DP in Algiers. Thus, the requirement to achieve immediate security through mass led to a twin-track and concurrent process involving a blend of sector and intervention forces.

The sector troops, tasked with framework operations, were found from the corps' light divisions. They bore the brunt of the mundane, but essential, security tasks. The key technique of *quadrillage*, or dividing the terrain into defined subareas by superimposing a grid system upon the map and then garrisoning troops within that grid, drove operations. This was done on a grand scale. Sector troops were required to man isolated outposts and conduct routine patrolling. This was the critical "secure" function. While critical in as much as it underwrote core security and sought to reassure the population, the type of troops assigned to the task and the equipment they received did not necessarily reflect this importance. They felt themselves to be the "poor relations" compared to the intervention troops of the General Reserve. Predominantly manned by conscripts and reservists and commanded by a very small cadre of professional officers and NCOs, morale and motivation among the majority of the units were not high. There were important exceptions, especially among those units who could trace their heritage to l'Armée d'Afrique. The Zouaves and Spahis were units in which *colons* had traditionally served and the

Tirailleurs were respected native infantry. While their respective manning underwent change, moving toward a 50-50 Muslim-Christian balance as the increased assimilation of conscripts and reservists made its impact, they used their heritage to sustain a strong identity and competence. Lieutenant Colonel David Galula,[17] who was to later publish influential works on counterinsurgency, based much of thinking on his experiences while commanding a company employed as sector troops.

There can be no doubts as to the cohesion and strength of identity achieved by the strike arm of the French counterinsurgency campaign: the General Reserve. The 10th Parachute Division (10^{e} DP), the 25th Parachute Division (25^{e} DP), and the largely Foreign Legion–based 11th Infantry Division (11^{e} DI) formed a solid core around which deliberate, intelligence-led strike operations against ALN field units were conducted. Officered by an experienced professional cadre including many from the Indochinese campaign, these formations were to achieve impressive results in both the *bled* and the *djebel* during what they came to consider "clean" operations. Both words held a respected and loved place in the lexicon of l'Armée d'Afrique. The *bled* was the pejorative term that the soldiers gave the Algerian hinterland, denoting a place that lay in the back of beyond, while the *djebel* was a corruption of the Arabic word *jebel* or mountain. The role of the intervention troops was to "hook, hold, contain and destroy" enemy units. The 10^{e} DP were also to prove equally effective in Algiers when required to reduce the threat posed by the ZAA, although their kinetic approach was far from "clean."

In this early phase of the campaign, the French realized that mass alone was insufficient. There was a need to introduce innovation. The failure to generate a coherent intelligence picture in the field frustrated Soustelle. His previous experience as an intelligence officer with the Free French's *Bureau Central de Renseignements et d'Action* (BCRA, Central Bureau for Intelligence and Action), coupled with his training as an ethnologist, helped form the decision to create and deploy *Sections administratives spécialisées* (SAS, Specialist Administrative Sections). From September 1955, these civil-military action teams were tasked with retrospectively backfilling the very evident capability gaps created by the pre-insurgency failure to offer some, if not equal, opportunity to the Arab population. SAS had 5,000 personnel based in 800 rural centers by 1959[18] but had begun to achieve tangible results as early as the spring of 1957. Each SAS unit consisted of an officer in command, a security platoon of Arab soldiers, a warrant officer, an accountant, a medical element, and a communications section. Embedded in local areas and covering a population of between 2,000 and 20,000, this mix of civil and military aid ranged from the medical to the agricultural, as well as providing military training to enhance self-defense capacity. A key function was the taking of a local census. While this offered intelligence value, it also played a critical role in laying

the foundations for the civil reforms envisaged under the *loi cadre*[19] proposals. Their sensitive approach saw them become the "enablers" by which local communities could begin to access citizenship, pensions, benefits, medical treatment, and education. They also began to address the malign effects on the local economy that the war had created, providing the finance and expertise to kick-start simple infrastructure projects as well as providing the loans required to reestablish herds and crops. In so doing, they began the slow, unglamorous task of winning the population away from the insurgent. Military training permitted the raising of local self-defense units, the *groupes d'auto-défense* (GAD), again threatening the insurgent as did the SAS' liaison with units from the army, the police, the gendarmerie, and the intelligence services. The degree to which the SAS damaged the efforts of the FLN's *organisation politico-administrative* (OPA) cannot be underestimated. Charged with running an alternative local government within the secured areas, the OPA could ill-afford to be undermined in this manner and SAS officers and those who cooperated with them became priority targets for the ALN. The key threat that they posed was simple: they offered access to the French model but did so with a very clear view of the reality that was Algerian village life. The SAS were to stick resolutely to their task throughout the campaign, despite the decision in July 1961 to reduce their footprint from over 700 sections to 250 as part of a reorganization effort. Often charged with "going native," they were particularly bitter over the decision to abandon Algeria. This should not detract from the innovative role they played, especially in the early years of the campaign.

Further evidence of a willingness to innovate saw the preponderance of poor-quality tactical leadership among sector troops addressed via the establishment of two *Centres d'instruction et de préparation à la contre-guérilla* (CIPCG, Counter-Insurgency Training Centres) at Philippeville (Constantine) and Arzew (Oran). Mooted as being an essential element of any army's counterinsurgency armory and established as a result of a joint politico-military initiative, their role was to impart badly needed role and theatre-specific expertise to officers and NCOs, including Psychological Operations (PSYOPS). It was from these establishments that Trinquier's techniques were propagated among the wider army from mid-1958. It was forcefully argued that there was little point in reducing the insurgent bands in a piecemeal fashion. To win, the counterinsurgent had to do more: he had to destroy the brain behind the guerrilla. The political movement had to be destroyed, and to do this, it had to be found, dragged out from the shadows, and crushed. The fact that the insurgent had gone underground required the soldier to react accordingly, using whatever methods proved most efficient. This was the argument of force—brute force. To paraphrase Colonel Charles Lacheroy,[20] the author of a counter-insurgency theory based on "psychological action," the prevailing view

was that, "New war can't be fought by reference to the Code Napoleon."[21] Indochina had taught Trinquier and many of the commanders of the intervention units that victory lay in the ruthless application of intent and method. They had been taught well by those who won in Indochina and by those who had incarcerated them after Dien Bien Phu and it was now time to put those lessons into practice. It was time to be innovative. Lieutenant Colonel Marcel Bigeard,[22] an old Indochina hand, was selected to command the school at Philippeville and Lieutenant Colonel Andre Bruge commanded at Arzew. Both had been in the hands of the Viet Minh as prisoners of war and quickly established a reputation for bringing a very direct and pertinent focus to training. Over 8,000 students graduated from the schools between 1958 and 1960, each attending a *stage* (course) of between four and six weeks. The culture, command, and conduct of Bigeard's *3e Regiment Parachutistes Coloniaux* (3e RPC, 3rd Colonial Parachute Regiment) were a shining example of how that philosophy manifested itself in both the *bled* and the city.

Phase 3: Rise of the Urban Guerrilla and the French Response: The Battle of Algiers (1956–57)

The ALN's Soummam Conference held in August 1956 produced badly needed direction for its forces. While dealing with tactical and operational matters, the key purpose was to attempt to create a unified politico-military strategy while also taking steps to consolidate and protect in-country structures. A key outcome was the decision to take the war into the cities at a hitherto unseen level of intensity. In so doing, the ALN leadership had correctly identified the French center of gravity. By rendering the cities untenable without considerable costs in terms of finance and, critically, constraints upon the population, French will to endure would be eroded, especially within the political and intellectual classes of metropolitan France. Clearly, Algiers would be where they would place their main effort. A second, operational-level, strand would be devoted to improving the capability of the forces in the wilayas via a concentrated effort to reinforce the field units with men and, critically, arms and munitions. This would be done in concert with a third strand, the strengthening of the ALN's grip on the rural population.

The French response was initially labored and heavy-handed. The police force quickly proved itself incapable of countering rising levels of violence across Algeria. This failure, and especially the general and ill-focused violence and repression of the population that accompanied it, further distanced the police from the population, but also struck deep into the police's own sense of security. It would become very apparent that their will was being eroded in a highly effective manner. This pan-Algerian effect was further exacerbated by a series of events in Algiers.

The French had continued to conduct executions of criminals to appease, or at least reassure, the *colons*. The effect that such a policy, and the use of the guillotine, might have on the indigenous population appears to have been either ignored or gravely underestimated. Two executions, carried out in Algiers on June 19, 1956, triggered particularly high levels of anger. The FLN, sensing an opportunity, issued a communiqué calling for all members to attempt to kill European males between the ages of 18 and 44. They were careful to instruct their rank and file to avoid killing or injuring women, children, and the aged. Forty-nine Europeans died by shooting over the next three days: the war had come to Algiers in a very direct manner and a suitable riposte was required. Disaffected *colons* carried out a counter-operation on August 10, killing 70 Muslims in what became known as the Rue de Thèbes massacre. The FLN mounted a bombing operation on September 30, targeting three "soft" locations in Algiers city center. Two bombs functioned, and while only three were killed, the attacks constituted a very effective strike at the increasingly embattled European population. The final straw saw the assassination of a respected mayor, Froger, by Ali la Pointe on December 28. To add insult to injury, the mayor's funeral was bombed. Thus, the stage was set for the Battle of Algiers.

Governor General Lacoste,[23] who had replaced Soustelle in February, called in General Salan,[24] the commander in chief and handed him effective control of the counterinsurgency. In so doing, Lacoste instituted a fundamental change in the French dynamic: he moved from a police-led operation to one led by the army. This was to have direct consequences for the rest of the campaign. Raoul Salan, an experienced colonial soldier, did not hesitate, embracing the opportunity that the Special Powers Law afforded. He handed the problem to General Jacques Massu[25] and his 10^{e} DP. 10^{e} DP deployed on January 7, 1957, and promptly seized back the initiative via a ruthless approach. Before considering the military approach in detail, it is necessary to place it within the wider political context. The failure of talks with the FLN in the aftermath of his election had left Prime Minister Mollet[26] frustrated, and the subsequent failure of Operation *Musketeer*, the Anglo-French assault on the Suez Canal, added to that sense of frustration. Mindful of his international position and the apparent crisis in Algiers, he attempted to appear decisive, issuing a declaration on January 9, 1957, in which he backed the army's role in Algeria and stated that France would never abandon Algeria. He advanced a three-pronged policy based on equality, coexistence, and the willingness to recognize the distinctiveness of Algeria. Mollet's offer was an unconditional cease-fire, free elections, and free discussions about independence with whoever won those elections. The declaration offered social and economic reforms including much-needed economic, agrarian, and educational reform packages. He argued that simply bowing to demands for

independence without first conducting reform would be to offer no independence at all. While he was careful to underline France's sovereign rights in respect of Algeria, taking a distinctly parochial approach in regard to the United Nations' right to intervene in domestic affairs, there is no doubt that Mollet was offering reconciliation, but he was offering it to an insurgent movement that had no intention of hearing the offer in the short term at least. Thus, as the prime minister was attempting to reach out to the wider Algerian population, Massu was about to conduct operations in a manner almost willfully designed to alienate a critical element within it.

Combining shock action with high-quality intelligence, 10e DP rooted out the insurgent networks within the city. The FLN were based in the Casbah, an urban district, comprising densely packed poor-quality housing accessed by a warren of narrow streets, alleys, and interconnected courtyards. This urban guerrilla's paradise had a population of some 80,000. Half of the adult males in the Casbah were unemployed and half of the population were under the age of 20. Although FLN strength in the ZAA was assessed to be in the order of 5,000, it was embedded in an environment that would, due to a combination of social circumstances and coercion, support and shield it. The movement commanded by Saadi Yacef, a baker by trade, was organized into three sections or branches: the political and financial section, the military branch that was never stronger than 150, and thirdly, an intelligence organization that was essentially emasculated by the political element's overriding control. To these three branches must be added the independent bombing network of some 50 operatives. 10e DP was required to be innovative, ruthless, and unbending. The troops' initial reaction was one of distaste as they regarded it to be "work for the cops." Using quadrillage, Massu and Colonel Yves Godard,[27] his experienced chief of staff, subdivided the city into sectors, allocating the Casbah to Lieutenant Colonel Marcel Bigeard's 3e RPC. Bigeard instituted a rigorous campaign using Trinquier's method of population control (*Dispositif de Protection Urbaine*) and the exploitation of intelligence that it generated. It is estimated that some 30–40 percent of the male population of the Casbah were arrested and interrogated during the six-month duration of the Battle of Algiers. The results were detailed *organigrammes*, which laid out the cellular structure of the FLN units within the Casbah. This was Human Terrain Analysis as conducted by the French in the 1950s. It also involved brutal interrogation that repelled civilians and some soldiers alike, but was justified on the grounds of efficiency. Some 3,000 detainees were to die in custody. Notable among these was the "suicide" of Ben M'Hidi, who was arrested and interrogated by Bigeard's troops on February 23 before being handed to troops operating under the authority of Major Paul Aussaresses.[28] M'Hidi's suicide by hanging was announced on March 6. A second suicide while in custody

by Ali Boumendjel, a prominent lawyer and member of the FLN, was announced on March 23. By the end of March, the French were confident that they had broken the back of the ALN presence in Algiers. In one respect, they were right: the impact of the French strategy was such that the ruling executive of the ALN, the *Comité de Coordination et d'Exécution* (CCE) fled the city, effectively submitting to the need to be a government in exile. This represented a major success for the counterinsurgency effort. Such was the level of confidence that units were returned to intervention operations where their absence had been keenly felt. This was perhaps premature as Yacef, as yet uncaptured, returned to the offensive. A bomb attack on Algier's casino, a popular night spot for the colons, on June 9 was spectacularly successful, killing 9 and wounding 85. Both Massu and Salan witnessed the immediate aftermath and the *colon* community reacted in savage fashion. Two hundred rioted killing five Muslims, injuring a further fifty, and causing widespread destruction of Muslim business premises. The majority of the police and military units in Algiers did little to stop it. There was no option but to recall 10^{e} DP and allow them to return to the Casbah.

Yacef's network was steadily reduced in the following weeks. The capture of key lieutenants forced Yacef to engage in negotiations, but these failed and further bombings followed in response to a series of executions. Increasing pressure saw Yacef's organization splinter in late September. Yacef was captured on September 24 and French forces followed this by cornering Ali la Pointe on October 8. He opted for suicide rather than capture. This brought the Battle of Algiers to a final conclusion. A key enabler throughout the Battle of Algiers was the use of torture to gain real-time intelligence, a process justified by Aussaresses[29] and Trinquier.[30] While such means may have delivered useful, or even critical, short-term gains, the long-term damage it did in terms of both the links between a nation and its army and the health of that army itself far outweighed the immediate returns.

Having regained control of the cities, Salan moved to the offensive in the interior, building on the developing strategy of hold, secure, and develop. Having received reinforcements and enablers, Salan was now ready to transition to quadrillage on a grand scale. As discussed, even if issues relating to quantity were being addressed, problems regarding the quality of the forces remained. Pragmatism saw lower-quality troops used to hold areas, but higher-quality units were first required to take them. This placed a very real strain on the intervention troops who found themselves operating at a punishing and debilitating tempo. This disparity in treatment and the constant overuse of elite forces were to be major contributors to the increasing feeling of estrangement felt by regular officers and senior NCOs. Nonetheless, the increased scale and efficiency of operations was having a marked impact upon the ALN's ability to

conduct operations within Algeria itself. The work of the SAS was beginning to deliver tangible results as was the combination of a policy of population resettlement, focused psychological operations, and strike operations. This was not without some cost. The establishment of *zones interdites* (*forbidden zones*), created by forced displacement of rural populations, was far from popular. The very scale of the displacement added to the scale of the problem: by 1958, an estimated 10 percent of the indigenous population had been placed into squalid and overcrowded camps. This was not winning hearts and minds, but it was a highly effective method of attacking the internal support infrastructure upon which the insurgents relied. The Melouza massacre of September 1957 is an indication of the degree of pressure the ALN were under. Three hundred inhabitants of Melouza, a small village in Wilaya 3, were murdered by FLN forces loyal to a "Colonel" Amirouche. Despite FLN attempts to shift blame for the killings onto the intervention troops, it rapidly became apparent that the catalyst for the massacre lay in an internal power struggle between the FLN and another movement, the *Mouvement Nationaliste Algérien* (MNA, Algerian Nationalist Movement). The immediate result was that the local community went over to the French, led by their charismatic leader, Bellounis. He was to command what was in effect a private army under the auspices of Operation *Olivier.* This defection, and others, posed a considerable and near-permanent threat to the FLN leadership.

Realizing that reducing the ALN's military effectiveness within the wilayas would not, of itself, deliver victory, operations along the frontiers were conducted in concert with those providing internal security. The ALN's logistics were reliant upon having relatively free access to safe rear areas sited across the frontier in Morocco and Tunisia. The French constructed fixed defenses along the frontiers to contain and channel the insurgents. Undeniably expensive in terms of financial cost, *les barrages* were electrified and equipped with sensors. They were also under air and ground surveillance. They posed a considerable challenge to the ALN. The barrier running the length of the Tunisian frontier, the Morice Line, was completed as early as September 1957. Its effect was such that it demanded ALN attempts to reduce it. The ALN faced Hobson's choice: reduce the effect of the barrier whatever the cost or face the slow strangulation of its field units within the wilayas. In forcing the ALN to confront this challenge head on in what was to be named the Battle of the Frontiers, the French had achieved a fundamental milestone in their military strategy. Forcing an insurgent movement into open, large-scale engagement on terms chosen by their opponents meant forcing that movement to dance to a French tune. The battle raged for the first six months of 1958. An increasingly frustrated ALN threw troops against the frontier defenses at tremendous cost. January and February cost the movement 3,400 dead and 529 captured. Losses in Kabylia alone amounted to 2,151 dead and

333 captured. March saw no reduction, with 3,132 being killed and 715 captured. Attempts to force the frontier petered out in late June, with the ALN having lost an estimated 23,534 dead or captured during the battle. Equally important was the fact that the Morice Line also kept 20,000 ALN troops penned in Tunisia.[31] In many ways, the Battle for the Frontiers represented the successful execution of the attritionalist effect that those planning Dien Bien Phu had sought to achieve in 1954. It is perhaps fitting that many of the intervention troops engaged in the Battle of the Frontiers had had a hand in both.

Thus, by mid-1958 the military element of France's counterinsurgency strategy had delivered a considerable level of success. The ALN had been comprehensively defeated in Algiers, allowing the French to secure their operational center of gravity, and the field units in the wilayas had been isolated from external support. The ALN had also suffered significant casualties in attempting to break through to their isolated units, exposing themselves to French operational and tactical strengths rather than avoiding them. The French military had much to be pleased about, but, once again, political events were to impinge upon them.

Phase 4: Effect of the Fall of the Fourth Republic (1958)

The very nature of the political infrastructure of France results in eternal compromise and coalition. The war in Algeria continued to exacerbate internal division and also increased pressure from without. The international community simply would not support a French Algerian policy that did not include the granting of independence. Furthermore, there was increasing evidence that the level of military commitment in Algeria was, at the very least, in danger of undermining France's ability to meet NATO commitments. The financial pressure created by funding the war and the increasing casualty rates being reported were also undermining popular support. The nation was growing increasingly divided and the political landscape increasingly muddled. February 1958 saw French aircraft strike a rebel camp at Sakiet on the Tunisian side of the frontier. While no doubt effective in terms of achieving further tactical attrition, the strategic effect was far from positive. Felix Gaillard's conservative government, linked closely to a cloistered Charles de Gaulle, which had formed in November 1957, was faced by strong international condemnation of the action at Sakiet and the equally strong internal counter-reaction to that criticism. The government fell on April 15, 1958. President Coty found himself unable to find a successor: nobody was keen to drink from the poisoned chalice. Overtures were made to de Gaulle, but he was not yet ready. After nearly three weeks of uncertainty, Pierre Pflimlin of the socialist MRP agreed to attempt to form a government, but his initial attempts foundered on the implacable

opposition of the *colon* community in Algeria and the very obvious reservations of the army. Both groupings feared that he would open negotiations with the FLN. Coty decided to call the *colons* bluff and directed that the Assemblée Nationale would vote for Pflimlin's proposed ministry on May 13. The result was public disorder in Algiers, involving the storming and occupation of the offices of the government general. In the absence of a firm civilian lead and hampered by a distinctly reticent Salan, Massu was forced to engage in negotiations with Pierre Lagaillarde, the leader of the protestors. The price for a return to order was Massu agreeing to the formation of a Committee of Public Safety and chairing it. This news caused consternation in Paris: the threat of a coup d'état appeared very real. Salan remained at a distance, frustrating Lagaillarde and forcing him toward the waiting hands of the pro-Gaullistes. Meanwhile, Coty continued with the vote on the Pflimlin-proposed government. The Assemblée Nationale approved Pflimlin during the night of the 13th, but this was rejected in Algiers on the grounds that the new prime minister would abandon Algeria at the first opportunity. The Committee's views were read to the crowd by Massu. He also called on de Gaulle to save the nation and Algeria. There could now be little doubt that the military and civil leadership of Algiers were in open revolt. There were, however, two aspects of the political machinations of that night, which bear close scrutiny. Before leaving office, Gaillard handed civil as well as military control of Algiers to Salan on the grounds that Lacoste, the governor general, was in Paris. One of Pflimlin's first actions was to confirm that decision. This clouded the legal waters somewhat, but it did give Salan some freedom of maneuver. He issued a proclamation on the 14th, demanding that there be an immediate return to order and making it plain that the Committee "represented the Franco-Muslim" community. Committees were established in cities across Algeria and France held its breath. Salan broke the impasse on the morning of the 15th by ending an address in Algiers by shouting "Vive de Gaulle!" This was met with a rapturous reception in Algiers, but more importantly, it signaled a way forward to a nervous Paris. The strength and makeup of a large rally in Algiers on the 16th, calling for a government under de Gaulle, including in the order of 20,000 pro-French Arabs, reinforced the need to act. Finally, it was becoming increasingly clear that an element of the French forces in Algiers were preparing to launch an airborne assault on Paris, Operation *Résurrection*, and that there was significant support from commanders based in metropolitan France.

Once again, France turned to its traditional response in time of crisis: it called for what might be termed a *man on white horse*, a savior who would ride to the rescue of the nation. France had an impressive cast of previous charismatic leaders including Joan of Arc, Napoleon, Pétain, and, of course, de Gaulle who rose from relative obscurity to lead the Free French

movement during World War II. Having led resistance to the Germans from a position of enforced exile, this time de Gaulle emerged from a self-imposed internal exile, stating that he was willing to "assume the powers of the Republic." Not all agreed and a difficult round of negotiations with the Socialists followed. While not de Gaulle's natural bedfellows, they held sufficient votes to counter the Communist bloc if they were used to support de Gaulle. The following two weeks saw de Gaulle act to consolidate his claim. The fact that Corsica had declared for the dissidents and the realization that the generals in Algiers had set a provisional date of the night of May 27–28 for Operation *Résurrection* further strengthened de Gaulle's hand. Pflimlin's evident inability to control events allowed de Gaulle to demand his resignation. After some prevarication, Pflimlin tendered it on May 28. France was left with a choice: face a coup d'état mounted by the dissidents or accept de Gaulle. The Socialists opted for de Gaulle and he was endorsed by the Assemblée Nationale, becoming prime minister on June 1. De Gaulle was also handed "special powers" to deal with the crisis. Three days later, he visited Algeria to reassure the population, making his famous *Je vous ai compris* ("I have understood you") speech in which he attempted to convince the skeptical *colon* community that he had listened to their concerns. He also seized the opportunity to stamp his authority upon the government in Algiers. He then set the conditions for presidential-led government via proposals for a new constitution that was endorsed by over 80 percent of the turnout in a referendum on September 28, 1958. The Fifth Republic was born on October 4, 1958 and de Gaulle moved from ruling by decree to assuming the presidency on December 21, 1958. On the eve of the birth of the Fifth Republic, de Gaulle, sensing the strength of his position at home, if not in Algeria, offered the FLN "a peace of the brave."

De Gaulle now had a strong mandate to resolve the Algerian crisis. It was clear that a significant element of population wished to rid themselves of Algeria, thus there was a very evident, and oft forgot, "push" factor at work at home. This domestic pressure became a critical catalyst in the unraveling of the hitherto unified official policy relating to Algeria, sending a powerful message to the insurgent camp that could now see growing internal divisions as well as the very manifest international disdain for France's Algerian policy.

Mindful of their role in the crisis, de Gaulle immediately acted to reduce military control in Algeria, reestablishing a civil lead in the form of Delegate General Paul Delouvrier,[32] who now had the military commander re-subordinated to him. Salan's position having become untenable, he was replaced by General Maurice Challe.[33] Both appointments took place within a week of each other: the new broom was used immediately. The fact that Challe, coming from the air force, was not an army man further reinforced the fact that de Gaulle was determined to bring the

army in Algeria to heel. Further messaging was contained in the title of delegate general: unlike governor generals of the past, France's "man" in Algiers was to be firmly controlled by Paris. De Gaulle's final imposed constraint was the fact that both Delouvrier and Challe were firm Gaullistes. This was to be directive control.

Faced with the need to establish a workable and sustainable politico-military approach, the new government developed a strategy of *vaincre et convaincre* (conquer and convince). Ironically, this was a slogan that would have sat very comfortably with Bugeaud, but while he would have grasped the requirement to use cultured force as a tool, it remained unclear if the current commanders in Algeria would be able to transition from the established use of brute force to a more supple position. The imperative requirement was to convince the population, to draw them toward the established government, but the key problem was the lack of a declared desired end-state. It is impossible to market the nebulous. To this challenge must be added the increasingly politicized role of the French higher command in Algeria. Salan had played with fire and had to be removed although his active involvement had not gone unnoticed by the ranks of junior officers who were becoming increasingly concerned by the growing realization that, despite their very evident determination to defeat the insurgency, all may well come to naught.

Phase 5: Conquer and Convince (1959–60)

Plan Constantine, the civil component of the new strategy, acknowledged the need to address the glaring democratic and social gulf between the rights and opportunities of indigenous Algerians and those of the colons. De Gaulle announced the plan on October 3, 1958, during a visit to Algeria. In a speech in Constantine, a major city in the east of the country, and preempting the appointment of Challe and Delouvrier, he outlined a five-year economic development plan covering a wide-ranging brief including commercial, agrarian, and educational reform. It should be noted that a driving influence in these reforms was the need to move the Algerian economy, included, as part of France, in the provisions of the Treaty of Rome. These measures followed the recent constitutional referendum where de Gaulle had extended the franchise to all Algerians. This bold stroke had born fruit in the short term with 80 percent of the non-European population voting and voting in favor of the new constitution. This struck an immediate, and very public, blow to the FLN cause.

De Gaulle recognized the tensions but had little room for maneuver. On October 23, he made an offer to conclude a negotiated peace with the insurgents, a *paix des braves* (peace of the brave), in the certain knowledge that it would prove unacceptable to both sides. De Gaulle did not hold out

the chance of negotiating independence, making it clear that his vision of an Algeria irrevocably linked to France had not and would not change: he was still wedded to "association not domination." As expected, the offer was indeed to prove incendiary, sparking wide-scale protest. The FLN, affronted by de Gaulle's suggestion that negotiations would commence once they had shown a wish to engage by approaching French lines under a white flag, rejected the overture within 48 hours. Ferhat Abbas, the FLN leader, made it plain to both France and the world that the solution lay in conducting negotiations about Algeria's independence—nothing else. The ALN were ordered to fight on. De Gaulle had achieved little: he had been publicly rebuffed by the FLN and the very fact that he had made any form of approach to the FLN caused great concern among the *colons*.

Both Challe and Delouvrier realized that this was the point at which to grasp the nettle: both the military and civil arms of the counterinsurgency had an opportunity to seize the initiative. While Plan Constantine signposted the direction of civil effort, Challe had to return to the offensive. Plan Challe was not novel in its concept: "Seize, Hold, and Build" was still the order of the day, but Challe brought a sharp focus to the execution of the strategy. Continuing to exploit the nature, competence, and qualities of his respective force elements, Challe concentrated his elite units, using them in a series of highly effective operations during 1959. The main effort between February and March was in Wilaya 5 where a series of large-scale deliberate cordon and search operations drastically reduced ALN capability. While sector troops held ground taken, 10^{e} DP, 25^{e} DP, and 11^{e} DI closed with ALN units located and tracked by specialist units such as the Commandos de Chasse. The old constraints of logistics and transport were removed by the fact that the greatly increased acquisition of rotary-wing aircraft permitted the use of the insertion of lightly equipped troops that could be supported in the field once landed. The nature of the contacts between the intervention forces and the ALN were brutal. Once located, which even with air-cavalry tactics was far from quick or easy, the insurgents were subjected to sustained strikes from well-controlled Combat Air Support assets while ground assets maneuvered round them to corral them in place. Once pinned, they were assaulted and destroyed. Building on the success of operations in Wilaya 5, Challe moved through a series of similar operations. Operation *Courroie* saw Wilaya 4 reduced between April and June before Operation *Etincelles* was launched in July. By reducing the ALN in Wilaya 1, Challe isolated Wilaya 3 that was then the subject of Operation *Jumelles* in late July, which resulted in the disruption of the ALN in its traditional stronghold of Kabylia. A subsequent operation, Operation *Pierres Précieuses*, cleared most of the Constantine area.

These "kinetic" and aggressive internal operations were to prove highly effective. The combination of tight border security—maritime as well as

land frontiers—coupled with a rapidly improving internal security dynamic began to constrain markedly the insurgents' capacity to sustain any form of operational tempo. Denied life support among the population, the armed insurgency withered on the vine. By early 1960, the military element of the *vaincre et convaincre* strategy was all but delivered. The army had effectively defeated their enemy in the field, delivering tactical and operational victory. The battle that remained was now a battle for the loyalty of the population rather than a battle for its security. As ever, the prize remained the population and this could only be delivered by achieving strategic success. This would require time and cooperation, neither of which was available.

Phase 6: Winning the Battle, but Losing the Peace (1960–62)

The delivery of military success could not mask a simple truth: the armed insurgency had been sustained long enough to have a fundamental impact upon the psyche of all of the stakeholders. The Algerian independence movement, in its widest sense, had gained an irresistible momentum built on moral force. That moral force was rooted in a combination of factors found inside Algeria itself, inside mainland France and along the corridors of international institutions. Compromise on the part of those advocating independence was unnecessary: time would deliver it. For the minority stakeholders—those wishing Algeria to remain French and, ideally, colonialist in character—compromise was unpalatable. While the writing was on the wall, many chose not to read it. Prime among these were an incendiary combination of angry, parochial *colons* and angry, frustrated soldiers. The *pied noirs* stood to lose all: their land, their livelihood, and their culture. Compromise represented catastrophe. For the professional soldiers of the Legion, the Paras and the Coloniale, compromise equaled defeat. Given the reality and the cost of the tactical and operational victory that they had delivered, another defeat so soon after the humiliation of Indochina was deemed unacceptable. De Gaulle was not blind to the growing estrangement between his policy and that advocated by the officer corps in Algeria. His tour of officer messes in late August 1959 had underlined the degree of resentment. While he took the position that the operational victory that the army had delivered could be used to force negotiations with the FLN, those who had delivered the success took a radically different view. For them, success in the field equaled winning the right to insist on the continuation of an "Algerie francaise," underwritten by a willing army. While recognizing that he had failed to convert the majority of the officer corps, de Gaulle was sufficiently sure of his standing within the Armed Services to conclude that they would do as he ordered when he ordered it. He was to be proved wrong.

In an attempt to move the issue forward, de Gaulle addressed the nation on September 16, 1959. He announced that the people of Algeria would be offered the right to determine their own future in a free vote that France would respect. The choice lay between outright independence and independence in association with France. The referendum would take place within four years of the end of hostilities, the date being at the whim of the French president. Self-determination was now formally on the table, but, once again, the FLN rejected the offer. Their motives for doing so were two-fold: they felt that there was no guarantee that the offer would remain in the event of de Gaulle losing the presidency and, second, they were far from convinced that, should they win, they would win a majority in subsequent elections. They had not fought this long and this hard to see political control of an independent Algeria slip from their hands.

The year 1960 started badly for both the French government in general and for General Massu in particular. On January 18, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a German newspaper, published an interview with Massu in which he was reported as stating that the army no longer understood de Gaulle's policies and that senior officers no longer felt able to offer him their unconditional obedience. Massu claimed that he had been speaking off the record, but he was removed from Algeria despite receiving strong support from Challe, who needed his military qualities rather more than his less than polished political skills.

The summary removal of Massu, the *colons*' hero, proved too much, provoking "Barricades Week." Ortiz and Lagaillarde, the extremist *colon* leaders, seized the opportunity to exploit what they saw as a serious error by Challe. They called for an eight-day General Strike, which was to start on Sunday, January 24. The opening moves in the strike would see mass demonstrations in Algiers. There remains debate as to the level of spontaneity involved, with some suggesting that Massu's dismissal was not the catalyst, but rather the excuse for an action that had been preplanned for some time. Irrespective of the degree of forward planning, the threat posed was very real. With crowds of *colons* massing, Challe and Delouvrier acted quickly, cordoning off Algiers to prevent reinforcements arriving from elsewhere and directing that 2,000 gendarmes place an inner cordon around the protestors with the aim of funneling them away from the area of the government general. Despite very clear direction to the contrary, the situation deteriorated markedly after firing took place in the city. Fourteen *colons* were killed and a further 123 were wounded, all by fellow Frenchmen. Challe ordered the men of the 10^{e} DP into the city. While he might have issued the order, 10^{e} DP lead elements *1*^{ier} *Regiment Etranger Parachutistes* (1 REP, 1st Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment) under Colonel Dufour and *1*^{ier} *Regiment de Chasseurs Parachutistes* (1 RCP, 1st Chasseur Parachute Regiment) under Colonel Broizat did not

arrive in as punctual a manner as they could have. The protestors immediately established barricades and refused to move. Senior army officers urged restraint upon Challe and he prevaricated under the pressure from "a soviet of Colonels."[34] The period of January 25–29 was tense in political terms, but the atmosphere between the protestors and 10e DP was cordial. Paul Delouvrier did not weather the political tension well and Challe's reputation was not enhanced either.

The crisis was averted because the *colon* leadership's self-serving approach manifested itself in a policy that was unacceptable to the Muslim majority. In adopting this parochial stance, they shot themselves in the foot. To this political myopia must be added the fact that a combination of inclement weather, tacit rather than active support from 10e DP, and de Gaulle's barnstorming address to the nation on the 29th broke the *colons*' will and Paris's authority was enforced—but enforced at a price. Once again, the willingness of certain officers to engage in overt political action had been exposed: in effect, a combination of civil leaders and officers attempted to launch a coup d'état. Challe's sense of personal loyalty to de Gaulle caused him to decline, but de Gaulle felt that the strength of loyalty that Challe could command from key units in the army in Algeria was questionable. While the senior leadership of the army in Algeria had held firm, arrests and trials of junior and middle-ranking officers followed, underlining the very real sense of discontent within the officers' messes of elite units. De Gaulle toured the officers' messes in March 1960 to reinforce the fact that he not only expected loyalty but also demanded it. The fact that he had to do so meant that Challe's tenure was now in question. Horne quotes the *New York Times* journalist and author, C. L. Sulzberger, who highlighted the key issue exposed by Barricades Week: "there would have been no such desperate Algerian crisis had France's professional army been truly loyal to the State. Civilian ultras alone were helpless and lacking in effective strength."[35]

The FLN response to the disorder was both predictable and, to a degree, accurate. To them, this was evidence that despite the huge losses due to the Challe Plan and the increasing disruption within their ranks, the French were paying a heavy price, too. This suggested that "more of the same" was all that was required: French will was being tested and being found lacking. Fortunately for the French, the will of the ALN inside Algeria was also being tested. The commander of Wilaya 4, Si Salah, whose forces heavily battered in May and June of the previous year, offered to come to the table with a view to exploring a peace agreement. The French commenced secret negotiations, which included flying Salah to France for a direct meeting with de Gaulle. In so doing, de Gaulle forced the hand of the *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne* (GPRA), the self-proclaimed government in exile, and discussions did take place in France, but they rapidly broke down. De Gaulle's only

consolation was that Salah was murdered by ALN elements shortly afterward, but there were real costs too. The GPRA were recognized by the Soviet Union before the end of the year and the election of President Kennedy suggested that American policy on Algeria would be less sympathetic to France than ever. September 5 saw the publishing of the "Manifesto of the 121" in which prominent intellectuals in France called for conscripts to refuse to serve. A tour of Algeria in December 1960 was cut short in the face of very evident European dissatisfaction. De Gaulle grasped the nettle, announcing a referendum on the Algerian question on December 20. The referendum would be held with almost indecent haste on January 8, 1961. The key question mirrored de Gaulle's oft-stated position that Algeria should be offered self-determination but only once hostilities had ceased. The population's response was definitive: 75 percent of the electorate voting in the Metropole backed him with 71 percent of the Algerian electorate following suit. The FLN's call for a boycott had resulted in a turnout of 59 percent and the number of "no" votes correlated closely with the number of Europeans entitled to vote, some 786,536.[36] This voting pattern represented a "backs to the wall" response, indicating a growing sense of frustration and fear. This frustration was also evident among some of the officer corps, both retired and serving. Salan had, of course, left the army and Challe followed him in January. The growing bitterness, sense of division, and active politicking within the officer corps serving in Algeria is brilliantly captured in Jean Lartéguy's novel *Les Prétoriens*, which followed his equally successful *Les Centurions*. The sense of desperation manifested itself in two ways: the formation of the *Organisation Armée Secrète* (OAS) and the Generals' Putsch of April 1961. The role of the OAS is not considered in detail here, but it was formed in early 1961 and comprised a blend of extremist civilian and military elements who vowed to continue the fight for a French Algeria to the bitter end, including, if necessary, the assassination of de Gaulle. Failure—albeit often bloody and destructive failure as they targeted the ALN, FLN, and the Arab population—was ultimately guaranteed by the unstoppable transition to independence. Their reaction was to switch to a "scorched-earth" policy to reduce the economic value of what would be left postindependence. This was to cost 2,360 lives and a further 5,418 injured: an astonishing total reflecting the fact that the OAS wanton violence managed to claim three times more civilians in less than six months than the FLN had achieved since 1956 before an unexpected truce between the OAS and the ALN was called on June 17, 1961.[37] While the OAS may be regarded as the child of extremist thinking, the Generals' Putsch serves to illustrate the degree to which French officers, ostensibly part of the French conservative establishment, felt alienated from their government. Gone was the idea of an army operating in support of a government fueled by a desire to achieve a wider purpose. This was an

army in rebellion—a direct threat to the state and to the personal authority and dignity of de Gaulle himself.

De Gaulle's decision to drop his opposition to peace negotiations without an end to hostilities enabled the government to announce peace talks at Evian, which would commence on April 7. This was to prove a step too far for elements within the military. They had grown used to having control since having it handed to them by Lacoste in 1957. The events of May 1958 had seen some of them actively contemplate taking power, but they had drawn back. "The would-be coup in December 1960 had marked a crossing of the Rubicon. Sections of the French Army were now irrevocably committed to revolt."[38] Generals Challe, Salan, Jouhaud,[39] and Zeller[40] agreed to lead the putsch. The aim was to use the well of support in Algeria to take and then hold it. There was no intention of invading France or of removing de Gaulle. Launched on the night of April 21–22, this was no Operation *Résurrection*, but rather a plan by which a fully enabled army in Algeria would complete the "pacification" of the country within three months and then present a de facto "Algérie française" to a Metropole, which would welcome the fact that direct action had delivered what they both wanted and needed. This narrative was designed to play to the *colons* and to the military in Algeria, but, given the political landscape in France and Algeria, it is difficult to see how it would gain traction among both populations. The primary political carrot on offer hinged on a return to the *loi cadre* reforms offered by Lacoste years before. Given what was now on offer, these paled into insignificance. This critical aspect, allied to a grave misunderstanding of how key elements of the French forces in Algeria would react, proved their undoing but did underline the hubris that was at work within those who conspired against the Republic. Frustration is perhaps excusable, but hubris has cost many a military commander their victory and their head. It is now clear that a failure to grasp a "bottom-up" approach, relying heavily upon junior officers and warrant officers, would founder on the rocks of strong direction to the contrary by unit and formation commanders on the ground. While General Gouraud, commanding at Constantine, declared for the plotters and ordered his units to seize Oran and Algiers, not all of his units followed him. While the army was divided, the air force and the navy remained steadfastly loyal to de Gaulle. De Gaulle broadcast to the nation on the night of the 23rd and the nation rallied behind him. The putsch was doomed with Challe surrendering on the 27th. Zeller followed within days and both Salan and Jouhaud were driven underground, joining the OAS.

The scale of the mutiny within army units is informative. In short, the degree of frustration and alienation was not mirrored in the number who rebelled. The five general officers notwithstanding, only some 200 officers were arrested, although it is clear that many more had been

complicit to some degree or other, if only through "active inaction." The up-front cost was relatively light, but there was an immediate political cost to pay: the government entered the negotiations at Evian in a position of weakness. The fact that European civilians had actively conspired against the authorities made it harder to secure guarantees regarding their future status in an independent Algeria and, of far more importance to a pragmatic French government, their ability to barter for "favored nation" access to the oil reserves in the Sahara was severely weakened. By the end of July, a combination of internal political disagreements within the FLN/GPRA and atrocities perpetrated by the OAS had served to cause a stalemate. De Gaulle, determined to force progress, spoke to the nation in a New Year address in which he informed the country that 1962 would be the year of decision. He declared that France would free herself "one way or another" of the ties that bound her to Algeria. Irrespective of what happened at the talks, France would commence withdrawing troops in January 1962 to start the long-needed modernization of her forces in order that they could take their place in the defense of Europe. The effect was as desired and the Evian Accords, containing the road map to the transfer of powers, were signed on March 18, 1962. The cease-fire became effective the following day. While the Accords had to be ratified by a referendum, the outcome was not in doubt. Even if the bloodletting that followed was on an enormous scale, France's Algerian War was over.

LA GUERRE RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE: A THESIS OF TORTURE OR A TORTURED THESIS?

Before drawing some conclusions regarding the wider impact of the Algerian War upon the French army, it is necessary to give some consideration to a key doctrinal product of the period, that of *guerre révolutionnaire*. It should be noted that while a product of the era, it is not suggested that the doctrine was a direct product of the Algerian War. It has often been argued that it formed the driving philosophy behind how French commanders conducted themselves during the campaign, a campaign in which cultured force was to give way to brute force. While there is much truth in this, it must also be recognized that to conflate the use of torture and the theory to the exclusion of other important aspects underpinning the doctrine is to be intellectually and historically unwise. The theory had its roots in the Indochina campaign, matured during the Algerian campaign, and was published after the loss of Algeria. In short, it was a "work in progress" commenced by Lacheroy and developed by Trinquier. The doctrinal waters are further muddied by the role played by Galula, who was to develop his own theory based on his extensive counterinsurgency experience.[41] While Lacheroy and Trinquier were to rapidly gain a

following in France, Galula did not, publishing abroad. It is important to understand the impact that these thinkers had upon the immediate conduct of operations within the respective theatres of Indochina and Algeria, but it is equally important to understand the longer-term legacy that they left.

Every process requires a catalyst and, in this case, the catalyst was Charles Lacheroy. A summary of Lacheroy's career can be found in the biographical notes section, but a closer examination of the relatively short period that he was to spend in Indochina reveals the circumstances that were to shape the thinking that allowed him to posit the theory. Lacheroy was not a prolific writer and the detail that follows is taken from an interview that he gave to the Service historique de la Défense in 1997 and subsequent analysis of that interview by Villatoux and Villatoux.[42] Before leaving France, in early 1951, he was advised by a senior officer that he had nothing to learn over there. However, in a little over two years, he had developed a new theory: *action psychologique*. It was this theory that Trinquier was to translate into *guerre révolutionnaire*, and which was to prove so alluring to many French military practitioners. While January 1953 saw the establishment of the first psychological warfare staff branch in Indochina, Lacheroy claims to have had no contact with them, designing his own methodology.

Having been mentored for three months by Colonel Rousson, an ex-prisoner of the Japanese who was deeply immersed in the culture of the country, he was posted to Bien Hoa and given command of the Bien Hoa sector by de Lattre. His forces disposed some 5,000–7,000 men: one regular regiment, 22^{e} *regiment d'infanterie coloniale* (22 RIC, 22nd Colonial Infantry Regiment), and a diverse blend of indigenous troops. This command was followed by command of a larger sector, Thu Duc, with a force of 20,000, the vast majority of which were again local levies. Lacheroy's conundrum was easy to enunciate but difficult to answer: given the resources to hand why had the French not already won? His intelligence officer explained that while they were able to accurately evaluate the quantity of first-line, regular Viet Minh units, the reality was that the entire population was involved to some degree or other. Their second echelon forces were drawn from everyday people, who were mobilized when needed. The Viet Minh was using them more and more to economize on the use of their first echelon forces. They were suffering losses of 50 percent "and thus I understood that the entire population were engaged in the struggle."[43] For Lacheroy, the enemy was conducting "Total War" in a new way. There were two hierarchies superimposed upon one another: a civil and a military. Rigid control was imposed and there were Viet Minh officials at every level of life. The military system was equally organized and administered. Lacheroy describes the two systems as a "system of double accounting" above which sat a third hierarchy, the

Communist Party, comprising about 10 percent of the population,[44] but omnipresent. He pondered the problem and the interview he gave in 1997 outlines some of his findings. Interestingly, Lacheroy does this through the medium of a series of examples, told as stories from which he extracted knowledge or wisdom. He recounts a story by which he illustrates a simple methodology: guerrillas caught mining a road are invited to de-mine it. They are told that if they agree to do so and there are no mine strikes in the following hour, they would immediately be treated as normal prisoners of war. There is resonance here with what was later claimed by Aussaresses and Trinquier: captured opponents would be tortured for information and then, the moment the required information was obtained, treated like prisoners of war. However, in the event of a mine being detonated within that hour, they would be executed as murderers. Clearly, he has no concerns over the use of summary justice and the fact that he does not reveal what would have happened to the prisoners had they opted not to enter into the contract offered is worthy of note.

In essence, these stories are presented as parables or fables. In so doing, Lacheroy, perhaps unwittingly, exposes the degree to which he had entered the mind of his enemy: the teaching of wisdom through parables being a common technique in the Far East. The key products were the need to realize that the entire population were engaged in the struggle, the need to "own the night," the need to counter enemy propaganda and psychological operations, and the need to recognize the strength of the enemy's will. This was to form the basis of his theory and the speed at which he developed it is a tribute to his intelligence and application, given the relatively short time he was to spend in Indochina.

He argued that there were, in fact, two "wars" being fought in Indochina, against two enemies: the conventional and the revolutionary. It was pointless to fight a war without understanding the core principles of war, and thus, there was an overriding need to train counterinsurgency troops in the relevant principles and to do so quickly. He set about instructing those in his command. A key initial step was *quadrillage*—subdividing territory into smaller areas of responsibility—to allow every junior commander to become master of his "turf." He is clear that the most difficult "students" he had were senior officers, who required a fair degree of persuading regarding the efficacy of his approach. He is careful to note that the commander in chief, de Lattre, did embrace the theory and claims that this was due to the fact that the commander in chief's son was fighting in the campaign as a young officer. He also explains that de Lattre's successor, Salan, had no choice other than to focus on a conventional campaign, given the degree to which the enemy had transitioned to regular operations.

Before examining how Trinquier developed Lacheroy's work, it is worth considering just why so many officers and senior noncommissioned

officers embraced the theory. France's postwar army and its officer corps, in particular, were far from unified. A very significant number had followed Vichy, either believing that their oath of fidelity to the Republic required them to do so or finding the politics of Vichy to be to their taste. While some were to see the writing on the wall and change sides, many did not. Those that did change at the last gasp were not trusted and those who remained with Vichy were neither trusted nor respected, especially if they had not been serving in the colonies. They were to find themselves in danger of being usurped by the minority who had followed de Gaulle into the Free French movement and believed that their time had come. To these two groups must be added a third element: those who had fought inside France, be they communists, socialists, nationalists, or conservative right-wingers. They regarded the other "sets" as being beneath them, but they were also quick to argue among themselves. It was this unstable mix that was required to enforce France's will in the colonies. For the majority of these men, two concepts became articles of faith. A *bouc-émissaire* (scapegoat) had to be found to explain the core failings so cruelly exposed in the fall of France and the blame was attached to Communist machinations and the party's loyalty to a wider, pan-international, political cause than France. The second tenet was that France's recovery—economic, political, and psychological—would be led by her colonies. Thus, "Colonies and Communists" was a philosophy that received a ready welcome in many officers' messes. That the defense of Indochina was rapidly seen to be a defense against communist insurgency, which, if unchecked, would prove highly contagious, merely fed this belief. For the army, the fall of Indochina was not due to military failure per se but rather due to political failure. France's politicians had failed to deliver strategic coherence and the price was paid by those charged with conducting the front-line defense of Indochina. The fall of Dien Bien Phu was a glorious defeat, but it was far more than that: it was the "stab in the back" that confirmed that, once again, France's political class could not formulate strategy to give to its army. For many, the menace that was the multi-stranded communist insurgency required a multi-stranded response that would have to be formulated and directed by the army if it was to succeed.

Trinquier's theory of *guerre révolutionnaire* was based on the hypotheses that modern war was now no longer a matter of conducting conventional warfare on a grand scale. The arrival of nuclear weapons had rendered that both unwise and unlikely. Modern war was to be a war between the guerrilla and the forces of order. The war would be insidious and protracted. The center of gravity would always be the population. It was only by gaining the absolute control of the population that one could wrest it away from the grip of the guerrilla and his "double accounting." That control would be won in stages with control through physical security being followed by control through making a better offer than the

guerrilla could. Given the evident determination of the communist insurgent that had been displayed in Indochina, there would be a requirement for an uncompromising stance: negotiation was a tactic for the weak. To cut the head off the chicken that was the guerrilla movement, it would have to be isolated and then attacked in detail. The sooner that this could be achieved the better, as mass was, in itself, a threat as it provided maneuver space for the insurgent movement. Trinquier also accepted that, unlike conventional war, the riposte on this particular battlefield must be a civil-military one—a comprehensive approach. The destruction of the enemy must be total and very evidently so to win the confidence of the population: half-delivered success would only exacerbate the problem. The two-phase Battle of Algiers offers evidence of how critical this aspect of the theory was. Given the structure of an insurgent organization, the key to destruction was the rapid and continuous gathering of information that could be converted into intelligence. This would have the twin effects of physically reducing the enemy while also increasing the degree of pressure upon those remaining. Tight security would isolate the insurgent from supply and reassure the population. Trinquier advocated a blend of fixed positions (to safeguard key assets and to overtly reassure the population) and a mobile offensive element that would create uncertainty and disruption. He also moved from the theoretical to the particular: having outlined the "why" and the "what," the theory is amplified to produce direction on the "how." In essence, the "how" reflects the structures adopted for the Algerian campaign, including the organization of zones and sectors, the use of quadrillage, and the need to control the population through the means of identity cards and "responsible" people at every level: from house, to street, to district.

None of this is, at first pass, contentious. Indeed, much of what appears forms the basis of many modern counterinsurgency plans at both the operational and the tactical levels. He even provides the rationale for the SAS teams that were so successful in the hinterland. Thus, one might conclude that the theory is, at base, both sound and effective. In many ways it was, but it is now necessary to consider the degree to which Trinquier included torture within his theory. There can be no doubt that he does. It forms a small element of his book, but it is critical to understand the context within which he discusses it. Trinquier's view was that the "terrorist claims the same honors [as the soldier] while rejecting the same obligations."[45] To afford the terrorist that consideration is unacceptable and the terrorist knows that. The aim must be to gather the required information in as efficient a manner as possible. Given Trinquier's emphasis on maintaining tempo during action, "efficient" equates to "rapid." He then suggests how this is best achieved: "No lawyer is present for such an interrogation. If the prisoner gives the information required,

the examination is quickly terminated; if not, specialists must force his secret from him. Then, as a soldier, he must face the suffering, and perhaps the death, he has heretofore managed to avoid. The terrorist must accept this as a condition inherent in his trade and in the methods of warfare that, with full knowledge, his superiors and he himself have chosen."[46] He is clear that efficiency demands that the prisoner is only tortured for information that he could reasonably be expected to have—that is, information that relates to his cell or, if interrogating the cell leader, his immediate contacts at the next layer. Furthermore, in the interests of efficiency, the interrogation should only be conducted by specially trained personnel. Trinquier then states that, once the prisoner has divulged what is needed, the interrogation should cease and the prisoner be accorded the standard protection offered any prisoner of war. The chapter notes also refer to the fact that members of the French Resistance had violated the rules of war and thus knew that they could not hide behind them. Many of Trinquier's generation had fought a very personal campaign against the German Gestapo and the Vichy *Milice* (paramilitary police force) in France during the years of occupation from 1940 to 1944. The threat, and use, of torture had been a very real and omnipresent danger. This is raised not to excuse Trinquier but to offer context to his view. The degree to which the use of torture has come to dominate the debate around *guerre révolutionnaire* is understandable and necessary, but it should not be allowed to detract attention from many of his other ideas. To describe it as a "theory of torture" is too simplistic, but events showed that it was a "tortured theory": it was too open to being abused. It is not the purpose of this chapter to explore the enabling role torture played by France's secret intelligence agencies, but there are very clear links between the function of the agencies and the commanders of the troops tasked to conduct *opérations ponctuelles* (direct support) at their behest. The BCRA and their successors, the *Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-espionnage* (SDECE, Foreign Intelligence and Counter-Espionage Service), had enjoyed the benefit of having their own battalion of elite troops placed at their disposal since 1946. *11^{e} Bataillon de Choc* (11^{e} Choc, or 11 Shock Battalion) were created for this role and were heavily involved in operations in both Indochina and Algeria. It is of note that both Aussaresses and Godard commanded 11^{e} Choc and were thus hardwired into the covert world of intelligence and its methodology. Godard moved directly from a five-year spell as the unit's commanding officer to assume his post as chief of staff of 10^{e} DP. He was therefore ideally placed to influence Massu's thinking on the use of torture. In seeking an explanation for the level of acceptance that appears to have been prevalent among influential commanders, one must consider the degree to which the command structure led the charge. This interesting area of study notwithstanding, Trinquier's methodology—largely one of strict population control and

ruthless destruction of the guerrilla networks—both urban and rural—was adopted and was instrumental in the delivery of tactical and operational victory.

The impact of Trinquier's thinking and the high-profile exhibition in Algiers of what that thinking can deliver has tended to mask the work developed by another important theorist, David Galula. A brief biography of Galula can be found in the biographical notes attached to this chapter, but his qualifications for developing a theory of counterinsurgency were impeccable. The fact that Galula created little impact in France owes much to the fact that he was neither a senior officer nor a parachute officer. He did not belong to the airborne cabal and he had not served in Indochina. He was, however, a proud son of North Africa. He was to serve as company commander of colonial troops, *45e Bataillon d'Infanterie Coloniale* (45th BIC, 45th Colonial Infantry Battalion) in Algeria between 1956 and 1958. His company was assigned to sector tasks in Kabylia, a region behind the Constantine littoral where the rugged physical geography had created an equally tough, independent, and parochial Berber population. The method by which Galula approached his work is illuminating. Refusing to be diverted by the "colonies and communists" mentality of many of his peers, Galula preferred to focus not on the rigid control of the population, but rather on the population itself, asking what it needed and how it might best be delivered. In so doing, Galula was to return to the core principle that had guided the men who had pacified North Africa. He was to return to the concepts enshrined in Lyautey's oil-spot strategy: take, hold, build, and then propagate influence. In so doing, he argued that a properly protected and motivated local community would turn their face from the insurgents. This was the process of hearts and minds at work. The written standing orders that he gave to his company in October 1957 are worthy of study.[47] The orders serve as a very clear summary of his theory and how it should look on the ground when in operation. It is surgical in its focus on the people and the need to serve that people to win the prize that they represent. It is perhaps only right that a French officer steeped in service in China should produce guidance that is rich in Maoist overtones: Mao's "Three Rules of Discipline" and his "Eight Points for Attention," issued in 1947, are all expressed. By doing so, Galula demonstrated that while he accepted the need to study the Communists, he arrived at an analysis that differed from Lacheroy and Trinquier. In practicing what was to develop into his *Theory of Counterinsurgency Warfare*, Galula was, in essence, returning to the principle of "cultured force." He did so at a time when it was not fashionable among his peers and he suffered the fate of many a prophet in his own land. He was not noticed because those that should have noticed him found it inconvenient to do so: their focus was firmly upon "colonies and communists."

CONCLUSION

If one defines "winning" as delivering operational success in the field, France won the war in Algeria. There is no doubt that the ALN were defeated. It is also clear that in winning the war on the ground, the French army stepped beyond its remit. In so doing, it contributed to losing the peace. The army appears to have done so willingly. Why? It has been posited that this campaign was the one that broke the camel's back. A war-weary professional army was brought home from Indochina still smarting from the humiliation of defeat at the hands of an insurgent force. It felt betrayed by its own government and betrayed by its Western allies. In accusing its allies of betrayal, it skirted around the legitimacy of a French presence after 1945 and chose to ignore the subsequent anti-Communist campaigns fought in the Far East by American and Commonwealth troops. It is perhaps best to leave those arguments where they lie. In advancing the argument that they were betrayed at home, the French troops that fought in Algeria may be on firmer ground. Any counterinsurgency strategy must be holistic in its approach. If the prize is the fidelity of the population, it is not sufficient to win on the battlefield. France's decision to leave Algeria, correct or otherwise, was a political one. Had the politicians advanced a sustainable plan, the required resolve would have been generated at governmental level, providing clear and enduring direction. The tragedy for those required to translate the policy into military action was that it was far from sustainable. This lack of sustainability was what lay at the root of the frustration felt by all stakeholders—political, military, and civilian.

The military, like nature, abhors a vacuum. In the absence of direction, it will fill that space with activity. In assessing the quality and legitimacy of that activity, one must consider the nature of the activity and what governed it. The role of the General Staff is to "operationalize" national strategy. Prior to the return of de Gaulle, France's politicians failed to deliver a strategy to operationalize so the military commanders in the Algeria designed their own. This need not have been a retrograde step. It has been argued that France was among a small cadre of nations that had an army capable of designing and delivering an operational plan. It was able to reach back into a tradition of colonial enterprise where an experienced and competent group of soldier-administrators had routinely exercised command and, where required, driven theatre-specific policy. Those tasked with doing so were always required to make that policy fit a national one. This was a constraint that they embraced. In so doing, they exercised the use of "cultured" force.

French military policy makers in Algeria appeared to have many of the required attributes to continue this tradition. They were successful colonial soldiers who commanded experienced professional troops whose

very raison d'être was the successful prosecution of colonial wars. The degree to which defeat in Indochina was to influence events in Algeria was striking. The contempt that many of the commanders had for ineffective politicians was deep, creating a readiness to depart from the French "script." Thus, while the intent to do so was neither overt nor inevitable, the potential to do so existed. The experience of fighting the modern insurgency in Indochina was to prove formative, creating a new counterinsurgency strategy. *Guerre révolutionnaire* was added to more traditional methodologies by officers determined not to lose again. In the Algerian situation, they were able to identify many parallels with the operational and tactical approach adopted by their opponents in Indochina. Their response was mixed. Much of it was innovative and impressive. The core technique of blending sector security activity with high tempo, highly kinetic intelligence-led strike operations was efficient. The ability to exploit intelligence was developed to an impressive degree. Much of today's modern Human Terrain Analysis has its roots in the French approach in Algeria. The fact that the army was able to absorb such a high number of reservists and conscripts while maintaining the operational and tactical edge over their opponents speaks volumes about the professionalism and esprit de corps of its professional cadre, doubly so given the high degree of recalcitrants that the reinforcement contained. The skilled use of native troops is to be expected as this was a tried and tested method of generating force. The embracing of new techniques, be it the SAS or the development of air-cavalry operations, also indicates a readiness to use intellect and innovation. Equally, the ease with which elite intervention units were able to switch between rural and urban operations indicates the presence of mentally agile commanders.

Taken at face value, the fact that the French had delivered operational success by 1960 is impressive. The modern student of counterinsurgency can, and should, learn much from the underpinning foundations of that success. The student must, however, consider the reverse side of the coin. France's soldiers fought a brutally efficient campaign but did so in a vacuum. The requirement to fill it pushed commanders into a space they had no right to inhabit. Caught between the need to serve the needs of local and national politicians while being required to protect a *colon* community that many of the army strongly identified with, it opted to embrace techniques that dishonored it. It entered politics and found it addictive. It treated the indigenous population in a manner that revolted both the population and many of the soldiers tasked with securing it. The use of torture was perhaps the clearest indication of the degree to which the army had departed from its roots. One cannot conduct a *mission civilisatrice* by behaving like a barbarian. To justify doing so by reference to the need to achieve results in the absence of political direction is unacceptable. Many within the ranks of France's army knew this, and also knew

that while its politicians deserved its contempt, it risked earning the contempt of, and censure by, the society from which it sprung.

France was shaken by the fact that elements of its armed forces had defied the state that it had sworn to uphold. The judicial response to their rebellion was, in part, tempered by the realization that there had been a policy vacuum and the need to acknowledge that many in France sympathized with the army. While death sentences were pronounced, none of the senior plotters were executed. General Massu, having avoided becoming enmeshed in the Putsch and remaining a towering figure within the army, exploited de Gaulle's need to ensure the loyalty of the army during the internal unrest in 1968 by forcing a concession from the president. In late 1968, de Gaulle issued a General Amnesty to all under sentence for acts committed during the war. Legally, the issue was closed, but perhaps one might reflect on the philosopher Edmund Burke's words, taken from a speech made during election hustings in Bristol, England, on September 6, 1780: "In doing good, we are generally cold, and languid, and sluggish; and of all things afraid of being too much in the right. But the works of malice and injustice are quite in another style. They are finished with a bold, masterly hand; touched as they are with the spirit of those vehement passions that call forth all our energies, whenever we oppress and persecute."[48]

This is what transpired and the French army was to pay a heavy price in the following decades: Algeria was indeed the straw that broke the camel's back.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF KEY PERSONALITIES

Aussaresses, Paul (1918–2013). Aussaresses commenced his military career in 1941, serving as an *aspirant* (officer cadet) in Vichy-controlled Algeria. Following the transfer of Algeria to Free French control, he was to be introduced to life in Special Forces almost immediately, serving in a Jedburgh team in German-occupied France. (Jedburgh teams were small groups dropped into occupied countries with the task of enhancing the capabilities of local resistance groups via the use of training and provision of air-dropped supplies.) He was to transfer into 11^{e} Choc in late 1946, commanding it between 1947 and 1948, before handing over to Godard. He saw service in Indochina before moving to Algeria in 1955, having been posted to the staff as an intelligence officer. There is evidence to suggest that the *bilan* (cost) of the Philippeville massacre of August 20, 1955, would have been far higher but for the impact that Aussaresses' intelligence cell had already created among the local ALN/FLN network. Aussaresses' facility with this nature of work brought him to the notice of the higher command in Algeria. He, in conjunction with Trinquier,

would lead the intelligence effort during the Battle of Algiers where he was known as "Commandant O" (Major O). His role and its efficacy are considered in the text, but the full details were not to emerge until he chose to give a series of interviews over a two-month period (September–October 2000) to *Le Monde* newspaper. During these interviews, it became clear that his modus operandi was well understood by senior officers and administrators in Algeria. The product of the interviews was published, and an unrepentant Aussaresses is quoted as stating, "I am resolutely in favor of the use of torture, no remorse, no regrets."[49] He also admitted to hanging Ben H'hidi and defenestrating Ali Boumendjel. The legal response in France was risible. Clearly, his superiors had harbored no regrets either as, after Algeria, he was posted to the United States as a defense attaché in 1961, where he lectured at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He was promoted to colonel and posted to NATO Headquarters, before finishing his military career as the defense attaché in Brazil. He was to work as an arms salesman for Thomson but also advised several South American juntas.

Bigeard, Marcel (1916–2010). Bigeard was born into a family of humble origins, his father being a railwayman. He commenced employment in a bank at the age of 14, proving himself to be a reliable worker. He commenced his obligatory military service in 1936 and served two years in a line infantry regiment garrisoning the Maginot Line. He was recalled in 1939, given the rank of sergeant and posted back into the Maginot Line. His qualities shone out and the fall of France saw him holding warrant rank. He escaped from a prisoner of war camp in late 1941 and joined the Free French. He was commissioned in 1943 and was dropped into occupied France as part of a Jedburgh team, winning the British Distinguished Service Order (DSO) while holding the temporary rank of major. His immediate postwar service saw him commence a 10-year relationship with Indochina where he commanded a wide range of indigenous troops before being posted home to assist in the raising and training of 3^{e} *Bataillon de Parachutistes Coloniaux* (3 BPC, 3rd Battalion, Colonial Parachute Regiment) that was forming in France, but he returned to Indochina in 1948 seeing combat duty with indigenous troops. He assumed command of 6^{e} *Bataillon de Parachutistes Coloniaux* (6 BPC, 6th Battalion, Colonial Parachute Regiment) as a major in 1952. 6 BPC rapidly gained a reputation for excellence, which was reinforced at the siege of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. According to the author Erwin Bergot, himself a decorated combat veteran, the tough French Foreign Legion knew 6 BPC as "the puritans." Bigeard's personal standing as a commander was hugely enhanced by two factors. He was an accomplished self-publicist, but, much more importantly, he played a key role in the leadership and management of the "paratrooper mafia" that commanded the defense at Dien Bien Phu. Bigeard was promoted to lieutenant colonel in the latter stages of the siege

before going into captivity. His period as a prisoner of war was short but highly formative in terms of his approach to counterinsurgency in Algeria where he commanded 3e *Regiment de Parachutistes Coloniaux* (3 RPC, 3rd Colonial Parachute Regiment), a key element within 10 Parachute Division. Bigeard's men excelled in the intervention role but were deployed into Algiers to combat the ALN in the Casbah. His approach was direct and effective but also brutal. Despite his later protestations that torture was a "necessary evil," evidence suggests that his units used torture as a matter of routine. He handed 3 RPC to Trinquier in March 1958 to assume command of the *Centre d'instruction et de préparation à la contre-guérilla* (CIPCG, Counter-Insurgency Training Center) at Philippeville. He returned to field command, but Bigeard was to play no part in the Generals' Putsch in 1961. Despite the frustration and humiliation of Dien Bien Phu, Bigeard stood above politics and his loyalty was rewarded. The man who started his military life as a conscripted private soldier ended it as a four-star general, retiring in 1976. Having studiously avoided politics during his service, he sat as a deputy in the Assemblée Nationale between 1978 and 1988. Always known by his World War II radio call-sign, "Bruno," he died in June 2010.

Challe, Maurice (1905–79). Challe was a graduate of St. Cyr, the military academy where France prepares her elite officer candidates who have passed a demanding entrance examination for their future career, commenced pilot training in 1925. He was promoted to captain in 1932 and attended the Air Force Staff College during 1937–39. He flew sorties during the Battle of France. After the armistice in 1940, he commanded a reconnaissance group before joining the Resistance after the Germans moved to occupy all of France. After D-Day, he commanded a bomber squadron. He was posted to Air Force Headquarters in 1947 before being promoted to brigadier and assuming command of air units in Morocco. He was selected to command the Air Force Staff College in 1953. He took part in the high-level negotiations that preceded Operation *Mousquetaire* (Suez) in 1956 before moving to become second in command to Salan on October 1, 1958. He succeeded Salan on December 12, 1958.

Delouvrier, Paul (1914–95). After studying law and political science, Delouvrier fought as a lieutenant in a Motorised Infantry Unit in 1940. Having passed the *concours* for the Inspectorate of Finances, his studies were disrupted in 1942. He joined the Resistance, rising to command a Gaulliste *maquis* (French Resistance forces living in the field) unit in 1944. His unit was tasked with the role of receiving General de Gaulle and driving him to Paris in the event that the 2nd Armoured Division could not. Following the Liberation, he followed a career typical of those tipped for high office in the civil service. He became a highly valued leader of teams supporting politicians such as Lepercq, Monnet, and Mayer before being appointed deputy director general of Taxation,

charged with reforming fiscal structures. He gained considerable experience in matters relating to the new Europe, taking part in the preparation of the Treaty of Rome and playing a critical part in the creation of the European Investment Bank where he was to later to become vice president. He was appointed delegate general on December 19, 1958.

Galula, David (1919–67). Galula's theories are considered in greater detail in the latter part of the main text, but, like Robert Trinquier, his career offers useful context. Born into a Jewish family in Tunisia and receiving his secondary education in Casablanca, he graduated from St. Cyr in 1940. Despite his evident talent, he was expelled from the officer corps by the Vichy administration in 1941 on the grounds of his religion and returned to North Africa from where he returned to service in time for the Liberation in 1944. He was posted to Beijing as an assistant military attaché in the following year. He was well placed to consider the ramifications of the Greek Civil War while serving with the United Nations in the Balkans. He returned to service as a military attaché in Hong Kong between 1952 and 1956 before serving as a company commander in *45*^{e} *Bataillon d'Infanterie Coloniale* (45 BIC, 45th Colonial Infantry Battalion) in Algeria until 1958. His approach to work in his sector of Kabylia was highly effective, exploiting his wealth of experience and willingness to transfer that experience into effective action. His company's record shows what a well-led and well-motivated body of troops could achieve while anchored to sector tasks. He transferred to Defense Headquarters in Paris and then attended Staff College at L'Ecole de Guerre. Keen to develop the army's counterinsurgency capabilities, he suffered the fate and frustrations of many a "prophet in his own land" and resigned his commission in 1962 to study at Harvard. He published *Pacification in Algeria* in 1963 before producing his major work, *Counterinsurgency in Warfare: Theory and Practice* in 1964. Both works consider counterinsurgency through the prism of case studies of Indochina, Greece, and Algeria. He died prematurely due to lung cancer.

Godard, Yves (1911–75). A career soldier and graduate of St. Cyr (1932), Godard joined the *Chasseurs Alpins* (Alpine Troops). Serving in the Maginot Line, he was taken prisoner at the fall of France but escaped in March 1944 to join the *maquis* in Savoy. He reconstituted and assumed command of *27*^{e} *Bataillon de Chasseurs Alpins* (27 BCA) in late 1944, retaining command until early 1946. Occupation and staff duties followed, but he was posted into command of *11 Bataillon Parachutiste de Choc* (11^{e} Choc, 11 Shock Battalion) in 1948, leading them on operations in Indochina. 11^{e} Choc's role was to provide direct support to French intelligence agencies, involving them in a range of deniable operations. Godard would lead them until 1953, forging close links with intelligence officers, links that would be central to his role in the headquarters of Massu's 10 DP during the second phase of the Battle of Algiers. His reward was to be appointed

director general of the *Sureté* (Special Branch) in Algeria in May 1958, overseeing 36 intelligence sections and 18 security sections. He would also help suppress "Barricades Week" in January 1960. He was to play a role in the Generals' Putsch in 1961, commanding the efforts in north Algiers, and joining the OAS after the failure of the putsch. He was to die in exile in Belgium in 1975.

Jouhaud, Edmund (1905–95). Born near Oran, and therefore a *pied noir*, Jouhaud was an officer in the air force with a wartime Free French pedigree. He had commanded the air force in Indochina in the closing stages of the campaign, before moving home to Algeria in April 1957 to assume command of the 5th Air Force Region. He had played a role in the Committee of Public Safety and had thus lost the trust of de Gaulle. Like Salan, he was "kicked upstairs" to assume the post of chief of staff of the air force. He retired in October 1960 and returned to Algeria where he was to become embroiled in the planning for the putsch. He was arrested, court-martialled, and condemned to death (later commuted to life imprisonment) before benefiting from the Amnesty of 1968.

Lacheroy, Charles (1906–2005). Lacheroy graduated from St. Cyr in 1927. A confirmed colonial soldier, he joined the *6*^{e} *Bataillon de tirailleurs sénégalais* (6th Battalion, Senegalese Tirailleurs) serving with them in West Africa from 1928 to 1930. He then spent five years in the Levant, before transferring to Morocco where he was arrested in late 1940 for assisting agents operating in support of the Free French. Imprisoned in Clermont-Ferrand, he shared a cell with Pierre Mendès-France, before the charges against him were dismissed for lack of evidence. He rejoined *la Coloniale* (Colonial Infantry, equating to Marines) serving in Tunisia and Mauritania. In June 1942, he assumed the lead for logistics in General Salan's headquarters in Dakar before moving to Algiers and then taking part in the Italian Campaign with 2nd Corps. The end of the war saw him serving with the 9^{e} *division d'infanterie coloniale* (9th Colonial Infantry Division) in de Lattre's 1st French army. Given command of a battalion from the Ivory Coast, he took part in public order operations in West Africa before returning to France in 1950, charged with preparing young officers for overseas service with *la Coloniale*. He agitated for, and received, a posting to Indochina at the start of 1951. He commanded sectors in Bien Hoa and Thu Duc, and it was here that he began to develop his theory of *guerre révolutionnaire*. Promoted to lieutenant colonel, he was to leave Indochina in the summer of 1953. He did not return. Lacheroy then served as a military advisor in the Ministry of Defense, before being posted to Algeria in 1958. He assumed the post of director of Information and Psychological Action Services in Algiers. He was to later to become the director of the *Ecole supérieure des officers de reserve spécialistes d'état-major* (Staff College for Reserve Staff Officers). He resigned his commission to take part in the Generals' Putsch and followed the almost inevitable course of joining

the OAS and receiving a death sentence *in absentia* before benefitting from the General Amnesty of 1968. He died on January 25, 2005.

Lacoste, Robert (1898–1989). Robert Lacoste was mobilized in time to see the end of World War I. While his war service was short, it left him with a deep respect for, and pride in, the French army. He qualified as a lawyer in Paris, joined the civil service, and rapidly became enmeshed in trade unionism, rising through the ranks of the *Confédération générale du travaille* (CGT, General Confederation of Work, a labor union), in the 1930s. The CGT was to suffer internal schism over the Munich Agreement, with Lacoste joining the "anti-Munich" camp. He was mobilized for the second time in 1940 but was vocal in his condemnation of the Vichy administration. He joined the strongly Leftist "Liberation-Nord" resistance movement before coming to a rapprochement with Vichy. Returned to an administrative post, he nonetheless continued his resistance activities in a covert manner. He was to play a role in establishing the provisional government and was rewarded with a series of ministerial posts. By the time of his appointment as minister in residence in Algiers in February 1956, Lacoste had held seven ministerial positions. His arrival in Algeria was not well received by the *colons*, who saw his relatively enlightened approach to the indigenous population as threatening. Unperturbed, he attempted to drive through his "loi-cadre" reforms. He was to take an uncompromising line over the Battle of Algiers, handing control to the army. He left Algeria in May 1958. His reforms were voted out in the Assemblée Nationale. He was to offer strong support to de Gaulle and remained a fervent supporter of a French Algeria while serving as a deputy and then senator until 1980. He died in March 1989.

Massu, Jacques (1908–2002). Massu, from a military family, graduated from St. Cyr in 1930 and joined the Colonial Infantry, serving with the *Regiment de Tirailleurs Sénégalaise* (RTS, Senegalese Light Infantry). Much of his service as a subaltern officer involved operations in Morocco, but he also saw service in Togo and Chad. In the aftermath of the fall of France in 1940, Massu opted for the Free French immediately, serving under Leclerc and finishing the war as a lieutenant colonel. He saw postwar service in Indochina and promoted, at the age of 47, to brigadier general in 1955. He assumed command of *Groupe parachutiste d'Intervention* (GPI, Parachute Intervention Force), the antecedent formation of 10 Parachute Division (10 DP). Massu would come to international prominence as the commander of 10 DP in Algeria and Suez. Massu delivered victory in the Battle of Algiers but was to be linked to allegations of torture and murder. He was to become involved in the Committee of Public Safety in May 1958 and Operation *Résurrection*, the threatened coup d'état, but navigated his way through the subsequent political minefield, promoting to three-star rank in July 1958. (French military custom sees brigadier generals carry two stars, thus three-star rank equates to major general.)

Massu was to be removed from Algeria in January 1960 following an ill-advised interview with a German newspaper. He served as military governor of Metz and commander of the 6th Military District, being promoted to four-star rank in 1963. He assumed command of French forces in Germany in 1966, gaining his fifth star. He retired from the army in July 1969. He died on October 26, 2002.

Mollet, Guy (1906–75). Mollet, a life-long socialist, cut his political teeth in trade union activity, joining the Section française de l'International Ouvrière (SFIO) (French Section of the Workers' International) at the age of 23. The SFIO were the forebearers of the current Parti Socialiste. Having completed his obligatory military service, he returned to local politics. Wounded and taken prisoner in 1940, he ended the war as a highly decorated member of the Resistance, having served with the leftist Forces Françaises d'Intérieur (FFI). He was elected mayor of Arras in 1945, transitioning into national politics when he was elected a deputy in 1946. He briefly became a minister of state in Blum's short-lived administration, but from 1950 he was to prove an enduring political presence during the 1950s, developing a firm grasp of European affairs. Mollet led a minority administration from February 1956 to June 1957. Despite driving through the steps required to achieve independence for Morocco and Tunisia, his Algerian policy stressed "an indivisible union between Algeria and Metropolitan France" but also acknowledged the need to respect the "character of Algeria." He saw his policy as being built on a three-pronged approach: "cease-fire, elections, negotiations." Perhaps ironically for such an ardent socialist, he also brought in the Special Powers Laws that permitted military involvement in police affairs in Algeria as well as authorizing the establishment of internment camps. He was to appoint Robert Lacoste as the minister in residence in Algeria. Under Mollet, the number of troops deployed in Algeria doubled, partly due to his controversial decision to use conscripts. The Anglo-French operations in Suez also occurred during his tenure in office. Mollet was to resign over a failure to win a vote of confidence concerning fiscal policy. Despite being asked to form another administration by President Coty within months of resigning, he was unable to win sufficient votes to do so.

Salan, Raoul (1899–1984). Salan, a confirmed colonial soldier, entered service in 1917. A graduate of St. Cyr, he arrived on the Western Front in time to see the closing stages of the fighting at Verdun. He was to be gravely wounded in the Levant during campaigning in 1920–21. While his nickname "The Mandarin" reflected the proportion of his career that was devoted to service in Indochina, it owed more to his proximity to French intelligence. The outbreak of World War II saw him assume command of a battalion of *Regiment de Tirailleurs Sénégalaise* (RTS, Senegalese Light Infantry). Following the armistice, the Vichy administration posted him to Dakar where he led the military intelligence branch.

He transferred his allegiance to the Free French, serving in Algiers and then during the Liberation. The end of the war saw him in the rank of general. He commanded French forces in postwar Tonkin and became commander in chief in 1952 following de Lattre's death. Political changes at home saw him removed from post in less than a year, forced to make way for Navarre. He received command of the 10th Military District (Algeria) on December 14, 1956, replacing a tired and ineffective Lorillot. Ironically, given what was to transpire, his arrival was met with hostility by the *colon* community who saw him as left-wing and tainted by the withdrawal from Indochina. Nonetheless, he was to be instrumental in underwriting de Gaulle's return to power, but, having dabbled in politics and with a firm pedigree in intelligence work, "The Mandarin" could not be trusted to remain in such an influential post. He was "elevated" to inspector general of the army to remove him from Algeria. Early retirement was inevitable and it was from retirement that he launched the General's Putsch in 1961. Its failure drove him underground where he played a major role in the activities of the extremist Organisation Armée Secrète. He was condemned to death *in absentia*, arrested in Algiers, and then imprisoned until the General Amnesty of 1968.

Soustelle, Jacques (1942–90). Soustelle was to play a pivotal role in events during the Algerian War. Born into a working-class Protestant family, and with early leanings toward Marxist pacifism, he became a talented and multilingual academic who specialized in the ethnography of Mexico. Initially posted to Mexico in February 1940 as the Assistant Defense Attaché, he joined the Free French after the fall of France and set about the task of frustrating Vichy France's diplomatic efforts in South America. Recalled to London, he assumed control of the *Bureau Central de Renseignements et d'Action* (BCRA, Central Bureau for Intelligence and Action), the Free French intelligence service. He moved to running Information Operations in 1942 before crossing to Algeria in 1943 to return to intelligence work as head of the *Direction générale des services spéciaux* (DGSS, Special Services Directorate) during 1943–44. He was appointed *Préfet* (a high ranking civil servant who represents the state) of Bordeaux before taking his seat in the Constituent Assembly as deputy for Mayenne. In the immediate postwar years, he served as minister for information, minister of the colonies, and secretary general of the Gaullist *Rassemblement du Peuple Francaise* (RPF). His loyalty to de Gaulle was rewarded by an appointment as governor general of Algeria in 1955. This appointment was not without controversy, as many regarded him as having a natural tendency toward greatly enhanced Algerian autonomy, if not independence. While this may have been the case prior to the Philippeville massacre, he subsequently took an unwavering "repression first, reforms after" line. He secured Algeria for de Gaulle in the face of the May 1958 revolt but received the Overseas Departments portfolio rather

than his preferred one, secretary of state for Algeria, signaling a growing rupture with de Gaulle over Algerian policy. He was to be linked with the extremist *Organisation Armée Secrète* and was forced into exile between 1961 and 1968 when he returned to France, and an active role in French politics, having benefitted from the General Amnesty of 1968.

Trinquier, Roger (1908–86). Trinquier published his thinking on counterinsurgency operations in *La Guerre moderne* (*Modern War*) in 1961. This is considered in detail in the main text, but a summary of his career offers valuable context. Born into a peasant family in the Hautes-Alpes region of France, he took a traditional route for advancement for an intellectually strong, but financially weak, student and trained as a school teacher. He was called up for military service in 1928 and was sent to Reserve Officers' School, again a traditional destination for school teachers fulfilling their military service obligations. He decided to remain in the army and, after further officer training, graduated as a second lieutenant in 1933. He joined *la Coloniale* and rapidly embraced the considerable independent command opportunities, which this afforded him. After an initial period of service in Indochina, he was posted to China in 1938 where he learned Mandarin Chinese. As a company commander, he witnessed the Japanese invasion of China and was interned by them in 1945. Following his release and return to France, he was tasked with raising, training, and subsequently commanding the 2nd Colonial Commando Parachute Battalion (2 BCCP) in Indochina, which was used for counterinsurgency operations between 1947 and 1949. This was the first time that his innovative tactical approach would bring him to the attention of his superiors. A second spell of service in Indochina from late 1951 saw him acting as *adjoint* (second in command) of *Groupement de Commandos Mixtes Aéroportés* (GCMA, Composite Airborne Commando Group). This formation-sized organization was charged with conducting operations behind enemy lines and supporting intelligence activity. By 1953, Trinquier, although still only a major, was in effective command of some 20,000 men. The French government was to abandon these indigenous troops following the debacle at Dien Bien Phu. Trinquier was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1955 and sent to Paris, serving as a staff officer to General Jean Gilles, commander of Airborne Troops. He returned to Algeria in 1956, quickly being handpicked to fill a critical intelligence role in Massu's 10th Parachute Division as they fought the Battle of Algiers. He inherited command of 3^{e} *Régiment Parachutistes Coloniaux* (3 RPC, 3rd Colonial Parachute Regiment) from Bigeard and commanded it during the Challe Offensive. He returned to France to fill a sedentary staff post and, finding it beyond forbearance, requested his release from service. After a very brief spell as a military advisor in Katanga, in Belgian Congo, he was in Greece when the Generals' Putsch took place in 1961. Had he been in Algeria, there is little doubt that he

would have supported it. He returned to France, publishing his seminal work on counterinsurgency in 1961.

Zeller, André-Marie (1896–1979). Zeller enlisted in the artillery in May 1915 and saw extensive service on the Western Front before deciding to remain in the postwar army. A talented staff officer he filled a series of posts prior to the outbreak of World War II. He escaped to England before deciding to return to France. He was posted to Algeria in September 1940, reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1942 and transferring his allegiance to the Free French. He served as Juin's deputy chief of staff in the *Corps expéditionnaire français* (CEF, French Expeditionary Corps) before assuming the posts of divisional artillery commander in two divisions. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1946, receiving his next start in 1950 when he took command of the 3rd Military Region. He was then promoted to lieutenant general in 1955, becoming chief of staff of Army Headquarters but only to resign the following year in protest at reductions in army manning levels in Algeria. He returned to the post in December 1957, holding it until retiring in October 1959. His role in the putsch focused on finance. He was arrested, sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, being released in 1966, and amnestied in 1968.

NOTES

1. B. Singer and J. Langdon, *Cultured Force, Makers and Defenders of the French Colonial Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 63.
2. M. Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 335.
3. A negative cycle of events, "enmeshed."
4. The elections in October 1945 saw women vote for first time. Seventy-five percent of the electorate voted Socialist or Communist. The PCF took 27 percent, the Socialists took 24 percent, while the MRP gained 25 percent of the vote. De Gaulle left his post in the face of the Left's victory but continued to have great influence.
5. Nine million for, 8 million against, with 8 million abstentions.
6. F. Cailleteau, *Guerre Inutiles?* (Paris: Economica, 2011), p. 71.
7. Ibid., p. 70.
8. Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962* (London: Papermac, 1987), p. 98.
9. J. Talbot, *The War without Name: France in Algeria 1954–1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), p. 38.
10. Ibid., p. 39.
11. Search and destroy, combing out.
12. Hooking onto, holding in contact.
13. Horne, *Savage War of Peace*, p. 122.
14. See biographical notes for details of his career.
15. H. Canuel, "French Counterinsurgency in Algeria: Forgotten Lessons from a Misunderstood Conflict," *Small Wars Journal* (2010), accessed June 18, 2014, http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/389-canuel.pdf.

16. See biographical notes for details of his career.
17. Ibid.
18. For further details on the role of the SAS, see G. Mathias, *Les sections administratives spécialisées en Algérie entre idéal et réalité 1955–1962* (Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998).
19. Governor General Lacoste had proposed a political solution based upon what could be described as "a mixture of federation and partition." It was met with implacable opposition by the *colon* lobby, and while Lacoste had been willing to ride roughshod over them, he could not circumvent the effect of a rejection, albeit a close one (279 to 253) by the Assemblée Nationale on September 30, 1957.
20. See biographical notes for details of his career.
21. David Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myth of the New Way of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 192.
22. See biographical notes for details of his career.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. See Paul Aussaresses, *Services Spéciaux, Algérie 1955–57* (Paris: Perrin, 2001), for a full account of Aussaresses' approach.
30. Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), Ch. 4.
31. Canuel, "French Counterinsurgency in Algeria."
32. See biographical notes for details of his career.
33. Ibid.
34. Horne, *Savage War of Peace*, p. 374.
35. Ibid, p. 375.
36. B. Ledwidge, *De Gaulle* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), p. 252.
37. Horne, *Savage War of Peace*, p. 531.
38. Ibid, p. 436.
39. See biographical notes for details of his career.
40. Ibid.
41. Those wishing to consider Galula's theory in greater detail should see David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), and *Pacification in Algeria, 1956–1958* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2006). Valuable context is offered by A. Cohen, *Galula: The Life and Writings of the French Officer Who Defined the Art of Counterinsurgency* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012).
42. Marie-Catherine et Paul Villatoux, "Aux origines de la 'guerre révolutionnaire': le colonel Lacheroy parle," *Revue historique des armées* [online] 268 (2012). Accessed June 26, 2014, http://rha.revues.org/7512.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, p. 18.
46. Ibid., p. 19.

47. Reproduced in Cohen, *Galula*, Appendix A.

48. Edmund Burke, *A Speech of Edmund Burke, Esq. at the Guildhall, in Bristol: Previous to the Late Election in that City, upon Certain Points Relative to His Parliamentary Conduct*. Originally published by R. Marchbank, 1780, accessed June 27, 2014, http://books.google.com/.../A_Speech_of_Edmund_Burke_Esq_at_the_Guil.html.

49. Interview published in *Le Monde*, November 23, 2000.

About the Editor and Contributors

EDITOR

GREGORY FREMONT-BARNES holds a doctorate in Modern History from the University of Oxford and serves as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. Dividing his time between teaching cadets on-site and officers of the British Army posted to garrisons throughout Britain and abroad, his wider counterinsurgency teaching and advisory role for the U.K. Ministry of Defence takes him regularly to Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, South America, and continental Europe. He has lived for extensive periods in Britain, the United States, and Japan and has conducted battlefield studies for the British Army in half a dozen countries, including the Falklands. He has written and edited extensively, with books on a wide range of military and naval subjects spanning the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries.

CONTRIBUTORS

JAN FEDOROWICZ (PhD, Cambridge) teaches courses on terrorism in history for the Department of History at Carleton University, Ottawa. Over a teaching career spanning more than 35 years, he has also taught history at the University of Western Ontario, the University of Toronto, the University of Ottawa, and York University. His association with Carleton University began in1985 and he has taught a wide range of courses on topics such as the history of futurist thought, the impact of communications technology on power relationships, and the history

of Central Europe, Russia, and Early Modern Europe. Two of his books on Polish history have been published by Cambridge University Press. He has also written a number of articles on scholarly topics including a paper on terrorist threats to energy infrastructure.

KARL HACK is a Senior Lecturer in History at The Open University, having previously taught at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University. He has interviewed insurgents up to the level of secretary general of the Malayan Communist Party, and written widely on conflict in Southeast Asia. Key publications include *Defence and Decolonisation in Southeast Asia* (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 2001); *Dialogues with Chin Peng: New Light on the Malayan Communist Party* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2004, edited with C. C. Chin); *War Memory and the Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012, with Kevin Blackburn); and "The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 3 (2009), pp. 383–414.

MATTHEW HUGHES is Chair in History and Head of the Department of Politics and History at Brunel University. He completed his PhD in 1995 in War Studies at King's College London before working for the International Institute for Strategic Studies and lecturing at the universities of Northampton and Salford. He was the Major General Matthew C. Horner Chair in Military Theory at the US Marine Corps University, 2008–10. He has written extensively on counterinsurgency for journals such as *English Historical Review*, *Journal of Contemporary History*, and *Middle Eastern Studies*, and he recently edited a volume on British counterinsurgency, *British Ways of Counter-Insurgency: A Historical Perspective* (Oxford: Routledge 2013). He is currently working on a book on British counterinsurgency in Palestine for Cambridge University Press titled *The Opaque War: Britain's Pacification of Palestine, 1936–39*.

PETER McCUTCHEON read Law at Edinburgh University, during which time he served in the Reserves. He then attended the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and commissioned into the King's Own Scottish Borderers in 1985. He saw several operational tours in Northern Ireland between 1986 and 2002. He also spent time peacekeeping in the Sinai Desert and mentoring para-military police in Kenya and led the training delivery aspects of the International Military Advisory and Training Team in Sierra Leone for a year. He is a graduate of the *Collège Interarmées de Défense at l'Ecole Militaire* in Paris. His final post was as a College Commander at Sandhurst. A retired Lieutenant Colonel, he is now a Senior Lecturer in War Studies at Sandhurst, specializing in France's military role in post-1945 Africa.

SIMON ROBBINS, a Senior Archivist in the Department of Research at the Imperial War Museums, studied History at Nottingham University and earned his doctorate in War Studies at King's College London. He is an expert on British and Commonwealth military history since 1899. He is author of *British Generalship on the Western Front, 1914–18: Defeat into Victory* (runner-up for the 2004 Templer Medal), *The First World War Letters of General Lord Horne*, and *British Generalship during the Great War: The Military Career of Sir Henry Horne (1861–1929*) and coauthor of *Staff Officer: The Diaries of Walter Guinness (First Lord Moyne), 1914–18*; *Haig's Generals*; and *Stemming the Tide: Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914* (runner-up for the 2013 Templer Medal). His book, *Dirty Wars: A Century of Counterinsurgency*, is forthcoming in 2015.

YANNICK VEILLEUX-LEPAGE worked as an intelligence analyst specializing in international terrorism and emerging threats for several years. He is currently undertaking doctoral studies at the Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, located at the University of St. Andrews. He recently completed a comprehensive study of the impact of casualties among troops deployed in Afghanistan on public opinion in Canada. He holds an MA in International Affairs from the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs and a BA in Directed Interdisciplinary Studies from Carleton University.

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A History of Counterinsurgency

A History of Counterinsurgency

Volume 2

From Cyprus to Afghanistan, 1955 to the 21st Century

GREGORY FREMONT-BARNES, EDITOR

Praeger Security International

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Editor's Note

Readers, particularly those accustomed to British English, should note that this publication follows the *Chicago Manual of Style* for capitalization and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* for hyphenation.

The *Chicago Manual of Style* capitalizes only the formal names of armies, navies, etc. Words such as army and navy are lowercased when standing alone or when not part of an official name. Titles and offices are capitalized when they immediately precede a personal name but are lowercased when following a name or used in the place of a name. Political divisions (empire, republic, etc.) are capitalized when they follow a name and are used as an accepted part of the name but lowercased when used alone. When preceding a name, these terms are capitalized in the names of countries but lowercased in entities below the national level.

CHAPTER 1

Island in Revolt: Britain's War against EOKA during the Cyprus Emergency, 1955–59

Aaron Edwards

> So we are faced with a duel enemy—the immediate anti-British elements, of whatever origin, and the Russians in the background, seeking how best to exploit them.[1]

> The 1955–59 struggle was a hard, determined, persistent struggle fought on many fronts. It was a war fought in hideouts, in ambush, in the detention centres against the cruelty of the interrogators, on the gallows which the freedom fighters faced with a song and smile on their lips, in the towns with the curfews, the pamphlets and the militant demonstrations.[2]

INTRODUCTION

On April 1, 1955, the island of Cyprus, Britain's strategic hub in the eastern Mediterranean, was rocked by a series of raids and explosions at key infrastructural sites, including the Cyprus Broadcasting Service transmitters, police stations in Limassol, the police headquarters in Larnaca, and Wolseley Barracks in Nicosia. The Greek Cypriot terrorist group EOKA (its full title being Ethnikí Orgánosis Kipriakoú Agónos or National Organization of Cypriot Struggle) under the command of Colonel George Grivas,[3] a former Greek army officer who had fought alongside the Allies in World War II, announced its ambitious mission to dislodge the British from the island in spectacular fashion. Grivas was secretly backed by Greece and had been planning a guerrilla campaign for two years before setting foot on the island in 1954. When EOKA's

armed campaign began, it was interpreted by the British as a direct challenge to their colonial authority. With the deterioration in the security situation throughout 1955, the Conservative government in London requested the assistance of Field Marshal Sir John Harding, the outgoing chief of the imperial general staff (CIGS).[4] He accepted the challenge, somewhat reluctantly, and was immediately appointed governor by Prime Minister Anthony Eden and given a brief to restore law and order on the island.[5] By October 1955 Harding had arrived and set about assembling a massive security force[6] of 4,500 policemen and 20,000 troops.[7] Their objective, Harding announced on Cypriot radio, was to "eliminate terrorism and intimidation so that men and women everywhere can go about their daily business without fear or favour."[8]

Shootings, bombings, intimidation, and civil disturbances became an everyday occurrence and were played out in the full glare of the world's press. At stake was Britain's alliance with Turkey and Greece in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the key security instrument by which Western powers planned to contain the threat posed by Soviet Communism and its satellites in the newly formed Warsaw Pact Organization. Also at stake was British prestige, already threatened by the rising tide of Arab nationalism elsewhere in the Middle East. It was in this context that the British government was exercised to ensure the EOKA insurgency then under way in Cyprus was brought to heel as quickly as possible.

THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT

Cyprus had been under Ottoman rule since the sixteenth century when it was forcibly removed from the hands of the Venetians.[9] Although it had always been home to a small Muslim community, this was dwarfed by the Orthodox Greek community. The census of 1881 estimated the population to number 136,629 Greeks, 46,389 Turks, 691 English, and 2,400 other.[10] Importantly, the growth of nationalism on the island had predated the emergence of the small island state almost 100 years earlier. Ironically the roots of *enosis* (union with Greece) were planted by British statesman William Gladstone in the late 1880s and in the early 1900s by Winston Churchill.[11] Cyprus was annexed by Britain in the Lausanne Conference, which culminated in the signing of a treaty between Britain and Turkey in July 1923.[12] However, the presence of a minority Turkish Cypriot community on the island and a much larger Greek Cypriot population made any further political movement toward either *enosis* or partition certain to be problematic.[13] As Oliver Richmond has argued:

> The Cyprus conflict is rooted in a conceptual conflict between the norms of territorial sovereignty and the rights of ethnic minorities and communities vis-à-vis identity. British colonial rule brought about a general increase in

ethno-nationalist sentiment through its policy of "divide and rule" in response to a growing Greek Cypriot anti-colonial sentiment. However, it was not until the late 1950s that one could talk about an ethno-national struggle in Cyprus.[14]

Unsurprisingly, Cyprus was beset by fault lines of conflict between the two rival ethnonationalist communities, which superimposed the broader conflict between Greek Hellenistic nationalism and British imperialism, a three-way antagonism that continues in one form or another to this day. One critic, Adamantia Pollis, has gone further than Richmond and articulated the argument that the British basically "redefined the nature of group identity from Muslim and Christian to Turk and Greek and further segregated the two communities." Most damning of all, writes Pollis, British imperialism facilitated the "formation of an apartheid mentality that precluded the perception of similarities or commonalities even where they existed, while making differences separating the two groups psychologically relevant."[15] It was within these parameters of difference that the threat posed by EOKA terrorism exacerbated antagonism between Greeks and Turks, particularly since EOKA was focused principally on appealing directly to the Greek Cypriot people "to throw off the English yoke and be worthy of the Greek fighters" from their Hellenistic past.[16]

COLONIAL INSECURITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF EOKA

In the mid-1950s Britain's imperial power was slowly beginning to diminish. It was a few years before former U.S. secretary of state Dean Acheson made his famous remarks on how London had "lost empire but not yet found a role in the world."[17] Nevertheless, the 1950s were a time of great turbulence and witnessed skirmishes between Britain's armed forces in the large conflict on the Korean peninsula between 1950 and 1953 and the small wars of Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus throughout the 1950s. The Suez Crisis of 1956—in which President Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, prompting intervention from Britain, France, and Israel against the United States' and United Nations' wishes—is often regarded as the high tide of British colonialism.[18] It was in the twilight of Britain's empire that military commanders were often the people who thought most about grand strategy, a concept that seemed to elude the top political echelons of government in Whitehall who were geared primarily toward short-term political decision making.[19]

For Britain's incoming CIGS, General Sir Gerald Templer, Britain faced a number of challenges that required it to lodge an insurance premium to guard against unforeseen circumstances. Templer was acutely aware of the financial restrictions under which Britain strove to prop up its ailing empire. In line with other European nations, the United Kingdom had accrued a massive debt in World War II and was beholden to the United

States through its sizable debt repayments. Yet as Templer argued, security "will cost money, but this must, as in the case of intelligence, be regarded as the premium to be paid for insurance."[20] Templer made the case that intelligence matters remained central to success in Britain's postwar small wars. So crucial to the defense of the realm was intelligence, he observed, that nothing short of a complete overhaul of security machinery at home and abroad was needed to ensure the continuation of effective monitoring of the internal security aspects of the British Empire,[21] especially in Africa, Asia, and the eastern Mediterranean. In preparing his *Report on Colonial Security* Templer had visited Cyprus and Uganda and also drew on his intimate knowledge of Palestine and Malaya, where he had served distinguished terms as a senior soldier and administrator.[22] In his view colonial security was about more than improving the intelligence situation and this could only really come about in line with other measures, such as an improvement in communications and coordinating activities between London and the colonies:

> Improving economic conditions do not always mean political tranquillity; on the contrary, the desire to see improvement accelerated is a potent source of unrest. In the process of evolution, the development of welfare must not allow the preserving of public order—a primary function of the government—to go neglected.[23]

Within the context of stringent measures undertaken by government, Templer remained in little doubt that the government could not have everything its way. As he continued:

> The pace has been set, the race for "independence" is on, and all we can do now is to make what sense of it we can. The only way to do this, paradoxically enough, is to make the pace for the first stage of hand-over quicker still. Instead of trying to hang on to the native regiments for as long as possible on the perfectly sensible ground that their governments are not fit to take them over, we should hand them over as soon as ever is practicable, on the equally sensible and far more cogent ground that the longer their future owners have to run them in under our supervision, the less mess are they likely to make of them in the end.[24]

Templer's report was, above all, strategic in conception and looked forward to the kinds of future challenges Britain could expect to see emerge in the longer term. Interestingly, it was his views on the operational aspects of policing and the security services' role in colonial security—not that of the military—that proved to have real purchase as soon as this report was printed:

> In this study we suggest that special attention should be given to the possibility of strengthening Colonial police and security services. These are the front line of defence against subversion and we are informed that recent experience has

revealed defects in their organisation. Efficient police forces and Intelligence Services are the best way of smelling out and suppressing subversive movements at an early stage, and may save heavy expenditure on military reinforcements. They are an insurance we cannot afford to neglect.[25]

Templer's report had not even been circulated when the first explosions rocked the tiny Mediterranean island of Cyprus, the one place Templer had visited during the preparation of his report and where he found an intelligence apparatus creaking to the point of collapse.

One cannot underestimate the tendency of British colonial officials to overinflate the importance of Communist subversion in the 1950s. Calder Walton highlights how they directed a disproportionate amount of resources toward discovering plots and Communism as the force fomenting trouble in the colonies.[26] However, there is also evidence to suggest that senior soldiers did not fully embrace this narrative and instead outlined the need to remain flexible in countering subversion without the guiding hand of Communism behind it. Templer outlined his thinking clearly in his report on colonial security:

Our enemy in the cold war is of course Communism. But in the Colonies this threat is for the most part indirect and intangible; it operates, if at all, through the medium of other anti-British manifestations which would be present even if the Communist Party had never been invented. Such manifestations are created by a wide variety of irritants, of which some of the most obvious are nationalism, racialism, religion, frustration, corruption and poverty. It is with these factors that we must chiefly do battle today. In Malaya, it is true, the fight is to keep a frontier against Communism. But in the other colonies its immediate impact is small or non-existent. In Africa, for example, the Northern Rhodesian copper-belt should be, according to Marxian theory, the imperialists' weak spot; but in fact our troops are fighting reactionary tribalism in Kenya, and may next be fighting outraged nationalism in Somaliland. So we are faced with a duel enemy—the immediate anti-British elements, of whatever origin, and the Russians in the background, seeking how best to exploit them.[27]

It was against this backdrop of colonial insecurity that one must see the glacial pace by which Cyprus moved to counter a right-wing, nationalist-inspired terrorist campaign that relied on its close alignment to the indigenous Greek Cypriot population who were motivated by a deep anti-colonization just as much as their left-leaning AKEL (Progressive Party of Working People—i.e., Communist Party of Cyprus) compatriots.

PUSHING THE BRITISH IMPERIALISTS INTO THE SEA?

Events moved quickly after the initial April Fool's Day attacks. By the end of May Grivas's fighters had made an attempt on the life of the governor of Cyprus, Sir Richard Armitage, after which it became increasingly

likely that he would either be assassinated by Grivas's fighters or pushed from office by the prime minister, Anthony Eden. It was accepted that he had been a "suitable Governor in time of peace, but a man who compared the Cypriote [*sic*] devotion to Hellenism to the Welsh attachment to their language was ill-equipped to deal with the situation which had arisen."[28] Eden and Macmillan kept him in place until an agreed replacement was found. In the meantime, EOKA had also begun its propaganda war, issuing its first leaflets calling on British troops to lay down their weapons and go home:

> British soldiers. What we did up to now was JUST A WARNING. You will receive much harder and pitiless blows if you keep obeying your officers' orders who apply in Cyprus Hitler's and Mussolini's methods. Cyprus will become a big British graveyard. NO POWER IN THE WORLD CAN SUPPRESS OUR MOVEMENT. We are all determined to die for our cause. We shall push the British imperialists into the sea![29]

There could now be no doubting the serious intent behind EOKA's carefully choreographed armed propaganda exercise. It meant business and in Grivas's words worked to a "general strategy carefully thought out in advance" in contrast to the British who showed "no sign of clear thought."[30] After the EOKA's murder of Detective Constable Poullis and Detective Constable Kotsiopoulos (two Greek Cypriots) in Ledra Street, Nicosia,[31] the police commissioner, George Robbins, admitted that his force was under severe pressure and could buckle with a further upsurge in violence.[32] It was around this time that Macmillan recommended a changing of the guard at Government House in Nicosia. After a visit by outgoing CIGS Field Marshal Sir John Harding—and his follow-up briefing of Eden's cabinet in London—the prime minister convinced his cabinet colleagues that Harding would be the man to turn around the ailing security situation and promptly announced his new appointment to the press in September 1955.[33]

Harding's arrival on the island on October 3, 1955, was greeted with much fanfare. Although he had a glittering career involving service in World Wars I and II, his expertise in small wars was untested, despite having approved the top-level budget and backed key generals like Gerald Templer and George Erskine in their counterinsurgency campaigns in Malaya and Kenya, respectively. As CIGS Harding had, however, gained a reputation as having made friends cross Whitehall, and he proved to be willing and able to steer a difficult course between the competing interests of the War Office, Colonial Office, and Foreign Office. At a grand strategic level there really were no equals, but what the Cyprus Emergency required was an individual who understood the demands of the military situation at the operational level. Much depended on how

Harding chose to reorganize the security forces in the fight against EOKA. Ultimately, though, this security would prevail by creating the necessary political conditions. As Harding's biographer, Michael Carver, makes clear:

> Harding believed in recognising realities. He knew that military action alone would not solve the problem, and that if the Cypriot people were to be persuaded not to support EOKA there must be signs of political progress in the direction of their aspirations.[34]

Harding immediately set up negotiations with the leader of the Cypriot Orthodox Church, Archbishop Makarios III, aimed at a political resolution to the conflict, for without this none of the security forces' attempts to bring the insurgency to heel would be successful.

In security terms, the New Year opened as it had closed, with considerable EOKA activity now in evidence across the island. A ship had been captured off the coast of Paphos in January 1956 trying to smuggle arms and 10,000 sticks of dynamite to Grivas's fighters. It appeared from weapons caches uncovered that the Greek Cypriot group had been building up its stockpiles over many years.[35] Indeed, many weapons were found to have been smuggled in through the mail. The Greek government was accused of turning a blind eye, and its foreign minister, Stephanopoulos, was directly implicated in the funding of EOKA.[36] Athens Radio became the principal instrument through which the vitriolic wave of anticolonial nationalism was transmitted for the benefit of the Greek Cypriots. Radios became an essential commodity that embattled EOKA fighters carried with them into their hides dotted across the hardened terrain of this ancient island. As Grivas explained:

> Good intelligence and courier services were a first essential. Our early system was rudimentary and the couriers broke every rule of security. I had to make superhuman efforts to train them up to my standards but finally I succeeded, and our ultimate victory was due in no small effort to their efficiency. I never tried to use radio, telephone or any scientific means of communication which might give our positions away.[37]

Large-scale sweeps (known as "cordon-and-search" operations) pushed EOKA fighters onto the defensive, despite the difficult terrain in which the leading members (including, famously, Grivas) were able to evade capture even when acting on accurate intelligence, which pointed security forces in the right direction.[38] Despite the ability of the British to try to counter the problem by introducing very substantial numbers of troops into the island, it also posed a dilemma for Harding. As his chief nemesis, Grivas, later pointed out in his memoirs:

The British answer to our methods was to flood the island with troops. It was the wrong answer. Numbers have little meaning in guerrilla warfare. From the guerrillas' point of view, it is positively dangerous to increase the size of groups beyond a certain point. I call this the "saturation point." It is determined by the nature of the terrain, the skill of the fighters, their requirements in food and supplies, the tactics employed and the need to keep down casualties. Any given area can usefully absorb a certain number of men; in mountainous country, where peaks and ravines are dead ground,[39] the figure is only a fraction of the numbers required elsewhere. I myself, when I joined the *andartes* in the mountains, always felt uneasy if there were more than a dozen of us together. Even in the plains the saturation point is lower than one might suppose: for example, to use more than five or six men for a village attack would serve no purpose, for the more numerous the attackers, the more difficult it is for them to escape after the action.[40]

There was no doubting Grivas's capability as a shrewd tactical commander. He foresaw problems whenever British forces were forced to adapt their tactical abilities beyond their standard operating procedures (SOPs).

However, what he could also do well was keep his focus on the strategic prize, entirely appreciating the limitations placed upon guerrilla actions without a favorable political context within which EOKA could operate:

My resources were meagre and I could not hope to win a military victory; it was rather a question of raising a force and keeping it in being no matter what the enemy did to destroy it. This, and more, was achieved in the first six months. Our intention was to focus the eyes of the world on Cyprus and force the British to fulfil their promises.[41]

Grivas—operating under the *nom de guerre* "Digenis"—worked closely with Makarios, who provided political leadership to the Greek Cypriots while Grivas was left to run the military campaign.

EOKA depended on the rule of fear to ensure his fighters did not talk and give away secrets to the British, with Grivas willing to "eliminate individuals at the slightest suggestion of their unreliability."[42] Crucially, he built up a bottom tier of school children to act as couriers and spotters as more experienced and older men (mainly in their 20s and 30s) carried out deadly attacks against the police and army. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the British began to arrest and detain a cross section of Greek Cypriots they accused of helping EOKA. Many of these people were subjected to coercion and, occasionally, brute force during long hours of interrogation. As military historian Colonel David Benest suggests:

Allegations of brutality against EOKA detainees in Camp K detention camp were followed by the murder of two British soldiers. A further two murders resulted in the rounding up of 1,000 youths in Famagusta, 100 of whom required medical attention. The murder of two army wives led to the detention of 1,000 Cypriots

at Karalois camp, with 256 injured in custody and two killed, one following the fracture of seven ribs by his interrogators and the other from head injuries.[43]

Although implying unbridled brutality, this was certainly not characteristic of military operations. Petros Petrides was one of those youths detained and mistreated by the British in Famagusta. He recalled how his torturers were not the soldiers of the Royal Ulster Rifles but police officers who pressed him for weeks about his knowledge of other EOKA fighters. The young Petrides was held in a small dungeon and threatened throughout his ordeal. As he told reporter Ian Cobain:

> I was taken from the cell, along a corridor and into the second room on the right, the interrogation room. It was completely spattered in blood—the walls, ceiling, floor and the bed frame in the middle of the room were all covered in blood. To help myself get through it, I told myself that they probably slaughtered a chicken and sprayed the blood around the room, but I didn't really know.[44]

Petrides also recalled considerable detail of his ordeal at the hands of a specialist team of interrogators in Famagusta Police Station:

> The interrogators were British Special Branch officers. No Turks were involved in my torture. They were men in their forties, stocky and well-dressed, in shirt and trousers. They were calm, they were never angry. They knew what they were doing. They were very good at their jobs. They spoke broken Greek. One of them was half Maltese. At one point he said: "I swear on the life of my Maltese mother I'm going to kill you."[45]

That detainees were subjected to "conveyor belt interrogation methods" appears to have been common knowledge among journalists at the time.[46] Nevertheless, the harsh methods employed to secure information seem to have been more acute in the ranks of the police than among the military. Petros suggested that the people of Famagusta enjoyed a cordial relationship with the Irish soldiers from the Royal Ulster Rifles,[47] something later placed under enormous strain by events in early September in the village of Liopetri on the edge of Famagusta District in the southeast of the island.

By 1957 Harding was tired of the pressure under which he labored in Government House. He longed for a rest after many years of fighting and privately looked for a way to step down and allow an experienced member of the colonial or diplomatic service to take his place. As Robert Holland has written, the "appointment of a 'career' colonial administrator to replace a Field Marshal brought things full circle. Sir Hugh Foot, however, was no ordinary governor. . . . He was a highly political animal"[48] and both his personal and professional backgrounds blended together to

ensure he would exercise his own independent judgment as governor. As the search for a political settlement continued, ordinary soldiers on the ground were still engaged in a violent confrontation with EOKA and the danger of the Turks becoming embroiled in the situation eventually came to pass.

EOKA'S SECOND FRONT

One of the most successful strategies initiated by Grivas was the systematic targeting of Greek Cypriot police officers, particularly those in the thinning ranks of the Special Branch who were given the unenviable task of building up an intelligence picture of the 300-strong EOKA force now harassing the British from within the Cypriot population. The statistics were startling. Within one year EOKA managed to initiate a pendulum swing in the percentages of Greek Orthodox and Turkish Muslim officers serving in the ranks of the police.[49] This also posed a problem for Grivas, who knew that any targeting of Turkish officers would inevitably draw heavy criticism of an ethnic motivation behind EOKA's armed campaign (Table 1.1).

Not long afterward the assassinations of Turkish Cypriots began, these incidents were met publicly with assurances from Archbishop Makarios that they would be afforded more protection. By 1958 he was even starting to announce "the need to grant the Turkish community special minority rights." However, rioting soon broke out in Turkish Cypriot areas in Nicosia and Famagusta as Hugh Foot replaced Harding at Government House. Tiring of the Turkish Cypriot protests Makarios recommended to Grivas in private that a grenade be thrown in their general direction. Grivas ignored the repeated calls for violent action, but events soon overtook EOKA's understanding of the precarious situation of the minority community, and an organization known as *Volkan* (under the command of Rauf Denktash) emerged and quickly spawned an armed wing called

Table 1.1.

Religious Background of Cypriot Police Officers

Religion	1954	1955	1956	Increase/ decrease
Greek Orthodox	850 (61.3%)	1003 (54.5%)	697 (37.5%)	–30.5%
Muslim	508 (36.7%)	734 (40%)	1135 (60%)	+54.6%
Other	28 (2%)	101 (5.5%)	47 (2.5%)	–53.5%
Total	1386 (100%)	1838 (100%)	1879 (100%)	+2.2%

the *Türk Müdafaa Teşkilatı* (TMT or Turkish Defense Organization), which served to reassure the Turkish Cypriot community. Inevitably it led to clashes with the authorities, and with the placing of a bomb outside Turkey's information office in Nicosia hundreds of Turks took to the streets to call for "Partition or Death."[50] Throughout the summer of 1958 intercommunal clashes intensified and Grivas was drawn into the fight. By July he had authorized attacks against Turkish Cypriots, only relaxed when responding to international pressure to call a cease-fire in August 1958. The cease-fire held only briefly, and British troops returned to the hunt for Grivas and EOKA with a renewed sense of purpose.

CLASH AT LIOPETRI

The tiny village of Liopetri near Famagusta was the scene of one of the most intense gun battles between EOKA fighters and the men from the 1st Battalion, Royal Ulster Rifles, who were forced to take repressive measures when they were fired upon by four men holed up in a barn. Prior to their deployment, the troops were provided with an intelligence summary from the Special Branch based in Famagusta town:

> The village consists of approximately 90 men, including people of all ages. There are a large number of dangerously political discussions continually taking place on anything and everything which has any political angle at all.
>
> Although there has only been one incident here the people are a very violent lot and have a very bad civil record with the police, who also suspect persons of this village to operate as terrorists in the surrounding villages and to be behind a number of ambushes, etc, noted in this document.
>
> Politically the village is about 80% right-wing and has two wanted men from it—Xanehos Samaras who has five brothers who all resemble one another and . . . Kymak Kyrianos Marios, a one-eyed fisherman of whom very little is known.[51]

In a bid to catch suspected insurgents by surprise, the battalion was to conduct a cordon and search of the village in the early hours of the morning of September 1, 1958.

Accordingly, at 2 a.m. on that day, men of the 1st Battalion, Royal Ulster Rifles, prepped their equipment, cleaned and checked their rifles, and boarded 3-ton vehicles as they moved out of their camp at Golden Sands and into their area of operations. It was a clear night, the moon was high, and the pulsating Mediterranean heat was dying down, but not by much. As they passed houses along the way there were no signs of life, with the exception of a few dogs on the streets. At 3 a.m. the soldiers stopped short of Liopetri after encountering a vehicle carrying several men attempting to leave the village. As they neared the center of the village, a car with

its headlamps turned off drove past them at speed, closely followed by a small group of men. They called on the men to stop, but they refused, thereby necessitating the firing of warning shots at the car. After pursing the car the soldiers captured one man who agreed to lead them to the main arms cache in the village. At first light the troops moved into the village and began a rummage (search) of the area around a thick stone barn. The walls of the barn were made of brick and straw and were complete with a tiled roof. One officer, Lieutenant Donald Boyd, gave the following statement to the police about what he saw next:

Whilst digging in the chaff in the barn, fire was opened up on us from above and Rfn. [Rifleman] Bolger was hit on the shoulder. I gave covering fire whilst the others got out of the barn. We then threw grenades into the barn but they had little effect and all that time we were being fired at with automatic weapons. A Company had arrived on the scene to strengthen the cordon. An interpreter, Corporal Fleet shouted to the men in Greek to come out. But each time he was answered by shots from automatic weapons. After we had used several types of grenades we used rocket bombs which had little effect and on the pre-arranged plan with my company commander, I went in after the last salvo with a section of my platoon. We got to the porch where I saw the dead body of a Cypriot. I was waiting on the porch when a man came to the doorway firing an automatic weapon at us. I returned fire but was hit in the knee and the finger and fell to the ground. The man kept firing at us all the time and others of my section were hit. I don't remember much more but saw Corporal Shaughnessy pull me clear into the house. Meanwhile shots were still being exchanged with other soldiers on the porch. I was then evacuated through holes in the walls of the building.[52]

The operational record for B Company, 1 RUR, recorded what happened next:

1 September 1958

It was apparent that the occupants of the building were prepared to fight it out and had no intention of allowing themselves to be apprehended, so the building was attacked with hand grenades which had little effect on the thick stone structure and were muffled by the quantity of "chaff" inside the barn.

I saw a man with a camouflage net over his head crouching and running from the barn to the house and I opened fire at him because he was firing on us as he came out. He dropped to the ground and appeared to be dead.[53]

In an incredibly brave act of selflessness, a soldier, Rifleman Patrick Joseph Shaughnessy, a 21-year-old Cork man, ran to the veranda under sustained fire and rescued his platoon commander from certain death. He later told the police:

I ran to the porch and pulled Mr Boyd halfway through the living room door and I grabbed Mr Boyd's sterling [submachine] gun and fired into the doorway.

I ran out of ammunition and a man appeared in the doorway with an automatic weapon firing and shouting. I picked up a brick and threw it at him and knocked him down. The others grabbed the wounded and dragged them into the house. I looked at the terrorist who was just pulling himself up and I grabbed his gun and shot him. I dashed out and handed the weapon to a plain clothes policeman who was standing nearby and shouted for it.[54]

Shaughnessy was awarded the Military Medal for his actions in saving the life of Lieutenant Boyd, who was wounded in the leg. His comrade Rifleman Kinsella, however, was fatally wounded when a bullet fired from inside the barn pierced his skull.

After the initial skirmish the officers decided to attack the barn. They were soon joined by CID officers from Famagusta and hatched the following plan:

It was then decided to attack the building from the roof to save further casualties amongst the Security Forces. I collected two tins of petrol and took them on the roof where a hole had been made into the room below. Petrol was poured down the hole, a saturated bedsheet was lowered and ignited. Whilst this was going on, heavy firing was still coming from the building.[55]

Realizing that they had nowhere else to hide the EOKA fighters made a dash from the barn from the front porch and a wooden door at the rear but were cut down in an unrelenting hail of bullets from the Ulstermen.

The troops and local police lost little sleep over the actions on that day. A police report subsequently concluded that "PITTAS and KARIOS were both known members of EOKA, having both been detained in Pyla Detention Camp from which they escaped in March of this year." Xanthos was suspected of being a member in 1955, but he absconded. Nothing was known about Papakyriakou, and "he was not suspected of any offence whatsoever."[56] 1 RUR recovered from the scene one .45-caliber submachine carbine M-3, one 9-mm caliber submachine carbine, one French MAT49 submachine gun, a .30 British Service rifle and ammunition, two shotguns, one 12-bore caliber Police Special (Greener Gun), a .45 Colt automatic pistol, and magazines for submachine carbines. It was clear that the EOKA fighters had no intention of running away and were heavily armed at the time of their deaths.

Grivas and other members of EOKA were incensed by the outcome of the fighting at Liopetri. In a statement released at the time, the armed group declared:

And they, the British, have repeated again the same cowardice, as they have shown before; they have burnt with petrol the refuge when they had fled! Because the soldiers of tyranny were tired after a four hour battle and were not able to stand any more. . . . And when the Englishman met with a difficult situation he

had neither chivalry nor humanity. The disgusting means in action and the petrol was near to hand which they used.

Long live our immortal heroes!
Long live the glorious EOKA
Curse and anathema to the tyrants
3 September 1958 EOKA

By now, Grivas noted, the "climacteric of the struggle was approaching with grim inevitability against a background of twittering pleas from Athens for a continuation of the cease-fire no matter what was done by the British Government, army and interrogators."[57] EOKA, however, were not prepared to back down, despite ongoing negotiations around the so-called Macmillan Plan in London, Athens, and Ankara.[58]

It was against this backdrop of political progress that the British military on the island remained galvanized by the success in engaging insurgents head on, something that Grivas knew only too well would expose EOKA's weaknesses. The general officer commanding (GOC), Major General Kendrew, issued a new directive to his military units in the weeks after the action at Liopetri, claiming that:

We have now launched an all out attack on EOKA and this had been decided by H[is] E[xcellency] the Governor after exhaustive efforts to bring sense and stability back to the island when H[er] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] has produced a workable plan.

It is plain to you that until we bring EOKA to its knees, and stop the intimidation of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, no constitutional plan can go forward.

Motto "Firmness with Courtesy"[59]

The British military were now in a position to learn lessons from its engagement with EOKA fighters and not simply the advantages accruing to local fighters in laying roadside ambushes. One report published in the aftermath of the Liopetri encounter noted how:

The most important lesson in many ways is the fact that without information the terrorists might well have got away scot free. At about 1100hrs on 1 September when nothing of any great value had been found it was decided to keep the cordon on in the hope that information might subsequently be forthcoming.[60]

Praise was reserved for the professionalism of 1 RUR's officers and NCOs in the operation, and several senior officers visited the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Norman Wheeler, in the days after the action.

To keep up the offensive on EOKA, Colonel Wheeler ordered the men of B Company, 1 RUR, to press home their advantage by saturating the main troublespots in Famagusta. Thus, as EOKA activists ambushed an RAF convoy south of Paralimni, the British responded swiftly by

imposing curfews and withdrawing, before returning in force to cordon and search the area. EOKA responded by blowing up tractors and other farm equipment in Dherinia and exploding time bombs inside one local security forces camp. Undeterred, Colonel Wheeler and his company commanders responded by upping the ante and mounting operations designed to frustrate their enemy, establishing roadblocks, and dispatching vehicle patrols commencing before dawn and continuing all day. Posters and leaflets were erected in a number of villages, and the soldiers arrested youths seen carrying weapons. For the next few weeks British troops worked according to a solid routine of continuous patrolling on foot and in vehicles. They imposed curfews on those villages and towns found to have been supportive of EOKA and rounded up thousands of men who breached curfew orders or who were suspected of being EOKA fighters. The violence naturally intensified, and the RAF routinely reported bombs on main routes and attacks on convoys. Ambushes typically consisted of a mine detonated at the side of a road, with the occupants of vehicles pinned down by sustained fire. By the New Year 1959, the headquarters of British forces in Cyprus moved to de-escalate military operations. One order made it clear how "Due to the political situation operations in the immediate future are to be very limited. Routine checks in rural areas will continue, also the use of O.P.s [Obervations Posts] and the plotting of Ops for future operations." This new directive pointed to the new reality that political negotiations were working toward a settlement and that the armed forces would come to play their part by adopting a lower profile.

Few held out hope that the talks would lead to a quick end to the armed conflict. Although Field Marshal Harding had attempted to negotiate with Makarios within a few months of his arrival in Cyprus, the talks were unsuccessful. The archbishop refused to condemn EOKA violence and was sent into exile in the Seychelles. Now, as a political agreement looked likely, he was permitted to return to Cyprus. In the intervening years, Harold Macmillan had replaced Anthony Eden, who resigned in the wake of the Suez Crisis of 1956. In a speech roundly supported by British politicians, Macmillan informed the House of Commons in February 1959 about the outcome of the government's talks with Greece and Turkey, setting the scene for how the armed conflict would be finally de-escalated:

> From the outset, Her Majesty's Government gave their full support to this initiative. We made clear to the other two Governments that, provided our military requirements were met, in a manner which could not be challenged, by the retention of bases under British sovereignty, together with the provision of the necessary rights and facilities for their operation, we were prepared to consider the transfer of sovereignty by Her Majesty's Government over the rest of the island.[61]

As news of the political agreement filtered down to the operational level in Cyprus, it had already been decided to suspend all military operations to provide the deal the best possible chance of success. As a matter of course, villages were to be avoided, except if passed through during training, and all military maneuvers were to be carried out only with explicit brigade-level direction. For the remainder of 1959, the military dimension of the conflict between Britain and EOKA gradually wound down.

But for Greek Cypriots, the struggle was far from over. Although Makarios ended his exile on March 1, 1959, and returned to Nicosia, Grivas was incensed by the deal and ensured that EOKA took no part in his Nicosia reception. "I did not even send a representative to bid him welcome," he later wrote in his memoirs. A question mark now hung over the EOKA struggle—would Grivas continue the fight or bow to political pressure? He explained his thinking at this juncture:

> The time had come for my decision: should it be peace or war? Was I to consider the struggle ended or should it be carried into another and still wider stage? To fight the British and the Turks as well was nothing new for EOKA, but since Makarios had signed the agreement he would turn against us if we renewed the struggle, taking with him part of the population, large or small. The Greek Government would also try to turn the Greek public against EOKA as well as withdrawing all diplomatic support from us. The prospect of civil war among the Greek Cypriots was a nightmare; yet if Cyprus had offered more space for manoeuvre and easier communication with the outside world for arms supplies I would have seriously considered turning Greek against Greek in the confidence that I should quickly master the situation.[62]

The reality was that EOKA had been dealt a body blow by Harding's continued exertion of pressure; moreover, reorganization of the security forces under Kendrew would have sustained the British position in the event of a failure of the political process.

At meetings in Zurich and London in 1959, members of the British, Turkish, and Greek governments agreed a mechanism for ending the emergency. Though Makarios expressed his misgivings about the newly agreed constitution adopted at the Lancaster House Conference earlier that year, he was persuaded by the Greeks to endorse the settlement. As Greek foreign minister Averoff made clear at the time: "I think we have arrived at a solution, an agreement in which the principles of democracy and of modern humanity are upheld and also the fundamental principles of everyone."[63] Notwithstanding this political agreement, Greek Cypriots were not deterred from continuing to oppose British imperialist designs and Turkish interference and sought refuge in the comfort of Hellenic blood sacrifice. As one of EOKA's more poetic fighters put it in a message to his people from the commanding heights of the gallows:

When we had run out of hope
With telegrams and embassies,
We folded up our little lives in an envelope
Small enough to fit in a schoolgirl's fist,
On a bicycle lamp, on a book's spine
And with red ink addressed it:
To the Greek-Cypriot People
Freedom or Death Street, Towns and Villages
of Cyprus[64]

These were words that were to resonate with his comrades long into the future. By the mid-1960s trouble had broken out between Greek and Turkish Cypriots and led to the establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission that remains on the island over half a century later. The road had been a long one, littered with dead, injured, and traumatized people. There is a sense today that many people in Britain have forgotten this conflict, including interestingly the British Army, which has yet to undertake a comprehensive "lessons learned" process from any of its postwar counterinsurgency and counterterrorist campaigns.[65]

CONCLUSION

The EOKA struggle was characterized by unrelenting guerrilla attacks and a robust response from the British security forces. There can be no doubt that it would have ended much sooner than even Grivas could have expected if his fighters had not received the active support of politicians and military officers in Greece, from the Greek Orthodox Church on the island, as well as from the Greek Cypriot people. Indeed, it could be argued that it ended when it did because that support could be sustained only in the absence of a political deal. By early 1959, however, it became apparent that Makarios's acquiescence to a deal between Athens, London, and Ankara had cleared the way for a settlement. Although this displeased Colonel Grivas, it could not forestall the emergence of conditions that rendered further violence unsustainable. In this respect it appears to support the hypothesis that insurgent campaigns utilizing tactics such as murder, subversion, sabotage, and street protests cannot hope to sustain such a level of violence without broader political direction, sympathy, and support. On the other hand, it also meant that the coercive response from Britain could be sustained only until the culminating point when politics overcame the need to fight. In the end the British response may have been slow and lacking a clear strategy—one that linked policy in London with the tactics that were being employed by the police and military on the ground in Cyprus—but, by 1959, Britain could not avoid the reality that the duel between EOKA and British security forces ended in an honorable compromise, with both sides able to claim victory.

NOTES

1. Imperial War Museum (IWM), Erskine Papers, 75/134/4, Templer, General Sir Gerald, Secret: Report on Colonial Security, April 23, 1955, 9.

2. EOKA Museum, Nicosia, *The Liberation Struggle 1955–59, 1st April 1955* (Nicosia: Government Printing Office, 2014).

3. Colonel George Grivas (aka "Digenis"): born in Trikomo, Famagusta, in 1898; fought in both World Wars; became a colonel in the Greek army; landed secretly in Paphos, November 1954; launched EOKA campaign, April 1, 1955; called a ceasefire in 1959; exiled to Greece; promoted to general; plotted to overthrow the military junta; returned to Cyprus where he plotted to overthrow President Makarios; died in hiding at Limassol, January 1974.

4. Field Marshal Sir John Harding: joined the territorial army in May 1914; fought in World War I; transferred to the Regulars in 1917; commanding officer of the Somerset Light Infantry; distinguished service in World War II (DSO + bar, MID, MC); commanded 7 Armoured Division; C-in-C Far East Land Forces during the Malayan Emergency; CIGS, 1952–55; governor of Cyprus, 1955–57; created Baron Harding, 1958; died in Dorset in 1989, aged 92.

5. Imperial War Museum, *Private Papers of Harding of Petherton*, Anthony Eden to Sir John Harding, September 24, 1955.

6. Aaron Edwards, *Defending the Realm? The Politics of Britain's Small Wars since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 133.

7. H. D. Purcell, *Cyprus* (London: Ernest Benn, 1969), 265.

8. Edwards, *Defending the Realm?*, 131.

9. Purcell, *Cyprus*, 166.

10. Doros Alastos, *Cyprus in History* (London, 1955), 321. Cited in Adamantia Pollis, "Intergroup Conflict and British Colonial Policy: The Case of Cyprus," *Comparative Politics* 5, no. 4 (July 1973): 582.

11. Oliver Richmond, "Decolonisation and Post-Independence Causes of Conflict: The Case of Cyprus," *Civil Wars* 5, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 172.

12. The Treaty of Lausanne saw the Turkish government officially recognize the annexation of Cyprus by Britain in November 1914. *The Times* (London), July 25, 1923; *The Times*, July 20, 1956.

13. Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash has written that EOKA's terror campaign was at its core a struggle for ethnonationalist-based*enosis* (union with Greece) and, therefore, enabled the group to accuse "the Turkish community of siding with the colonial power and opposing their freedom fighters, that is to say EOKA terrorists. This was a deliberate distortion of both EOKA's purpose and the Turkish community's attitude." R. R. Denktask, *The Cyprus Triangle* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), 23.

14. Denktask, *Cyprus Triangle*, 184.

15. Pollis, "Intergroup Conflict and British Colonial Policy," 590.

16. George Grivas, *The Memoirs of General Grivas*, ed. Charles Foley (London: Longmans, 1964), 32.

17. Dean Acheson, "Our Atlantic Alliance: The Political and Economic Strands," speech delivered at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York, December 5, 1962. Cited in Douglas Brinkley, "Dean Acheson and the 'Special

Relationship': The West Point Speech of December 1962," *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 3 (September 1990): 599–608.

18. Niall Ferguson, *Civilisation: The West and the Rest* (London: Penguin, 2011), 303.

19. For more discussion on this point see Edwards, *Defending the Realm?*

20. The National Archives (TNA), CAB 21/2925, Gerald Templer, "Report on Colonial Security," April 23, 1955.

21. Rory Cormac, "Organizing Intelligence: An Introduction to the 1955 Report on Colonial Security," *Intelligence and National Security* 25, no. 6 (2010): 811.

22. Templer, "Report on Colonial Security."

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Commonwealth Secretary's Report on Defence (C. 54), November 2, 1954 cited in Ibid.

26. Calder Walton, *Empire of Secrets: British Intelligence, the Cold War and the Twilight of Empire* (London: Harper Press, 2013), 222.

27. Walton, *Empire of Secrets*, 222.

28. Purcell, *Cyprus*, 280.

29. Charles Foley, *Island in Revolt* (London: Longmans, 1962), 24.

30. Grivas, *Memoirs*, 46.

31. *The Cyprian Chronicle*, August 29, 1955.

32. Georgina Sinclair, *At the End of the Line: Colonial Policing and the Imperial Endgame, 1945–80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 118.

33. Michael Carver, *Harding of Petherton: Field Marshal* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), 196.

34. Carver, *Harding of Petherton*, 205.

35. Nancy Crawshaw, "Restoring Order in Cyprus," *The World Today* 12, no. 4 (April 1956): 145.

36. Purcell, *Cyprus*, 255.

37. Grivas, *Memoirs*, 28.

38. Simon Robbins alerts us to the fact that Harding dedicated much of 1956 to rebuilding intelligence. See Simon Robbins, "The British Counter-Insurgency in Cyprus," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 4–5 (2012): 725.

39. In military terms, this denotes terrain that by its nature reduces or altogether obscures one's visibility to the enemy. Thus, troops seeking cover or concealment appreciate the benefits of "dead ground."

40. Grivas, *Memoirs*, 46–47.

41. Ibid, 47.

42. Robert Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954–1959* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 50.

43. David Benest, "A Liberal Democratic State and COIN: The Case of Britain, or Why Atrocities Can Still Happen," *Civil Wars* 14, no. 1 (March 2011): 41. By December 1957 there were 127 adults and 147 prisoners under the age of 21 detained in the Central Prison in Nicosia for emergency-related offenses. HMSO (Her Majesty's Printing Office), *Cyprus: Report for the Year 1957* (London: HMSO, 1958), 65.

44. Ian Cobain, *Cruel Britannia: A Secret History of Torture* (London: Portobello Books, 2012), 96.

45. Ibid., 96–97.
46. Robbins, "The British Counter-insurgency in Cyprus," 731.
47. Interview with Petros Petrides, Limassol, January 20, 2014.
48. Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus*, 213–14.
49. Statistics adapted from Andrew R. Novo, "Friend or Foe? The Cyprus Police Force and the EOKA Insurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 3 (2012): 414–31.
50. Purcell, *Cyprus*, 294.
51. RUR Museum, Cyprus Files, Famagusta Special Branch Intsum (Intelligence Summary).
52. RUR, Cyprus Files, "Statement Given of Kenneth Donald Boy 20 Years. Army Officer of Royal Ulster Rifles, Karalagh Camp, Famagusta. Statement Taken 10.30 Hours, 5th September 1958."
53. Royal Ulster Rifles Museum, Belfast (hereafter RUR), Cyprus Files, "Statement of Patrick Joseph Shaughnessy, 21 Years, Royal Ulster Rifles, Golden Sands Camp, Famagusta, Statement Taken 12.30 Hours 4 September 1958."
54. RUR Museum, Cyprus Files, "Statement by Lieutenant Donald Boyd, 3 September 1958."
55. RUR, Cyprus Files, "Statement by D.S. H. Jacobs, CID Famagusta."
56. RUR, Cyprus Files, Covering Report of D/S Uden, Dated September 9, 1958.
57. Grivas, *Memoirs*, 159.
58. The Macmillan Plan was devised in the summer of 1958 as an initiative by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to increase Cypriot self-governance by reaching a political settlement with the various parties in conflict. The plan ultimately failed, but it did point the way toward the terms of reference that would lead to Cypriot independence in 1960.
59. RUR, Cyprus Files, "Director of Ops. Kendrew to all Unit Commanders. 22 July 1958."
60. RUR Museum, Cyprus Files, "Lessons Learned Pamphlet (n.d.)"
61. House of Commons Debates (Hansard), February 19, 1959, vol. 600, Col. 618.
62. Grivas, *Memoirs*, 198–99.
63. Cited in Purcell, *Cyprus*, 306.
64. Pamphlet in the EOKA Museum, Nicosia: *The Liberation Struggle 1955–59*.
65. Captain J. D. Moss, "The Cyprus Emergency (1955–1960): An Effective COIN Campaign? Part Two," *British Army Review* 160 (Spring/Summer 2014): 68–77.

CHAPTER 2

Searching for a Solution to a Conundrum: Indian Counterinsurgency since 1956

Simon Robbins

INTRODUCTION

During the second half of the twentieth century, the Indian army had more practice at counterinsurgency campaigning than any other army, apart from the British Army, having been fighting insurgencies almost continuously since independence. The Indian army faced a legacy of various imperial police actions that the British had undertaken during the colonial period, notably on the North-West Frontier and in Burma, but this was overshadowed by the very different experience of World Wars I and II. By the 1950s, the army was organized and trained to fight conventionally against an external threat and continued to perceive this as its main priority into the 1990s, while facing the continuing rivalry with Pakistan, and from the 1960s, with China. Until the publication of *Indian Army Doctrine* in October 2004 and *Doctrine for Sub-Conventional Operations* in December 2006, the army did not possess a formal written counterinsurgency doctrine. Until the late 1960s, there were no training manuals on counterinsurgency either. Moreover, neither the central government's home ministry, which controls the paramilitaries, nor the state governments, which operate the local police forces, had any doctrine. The absence of a counterinsurgency doctrine led not only to a continuing overemphasis on conventional warfare but also to a failure to prepare and train for fighting guerrillas. The literature available in journals and training publications did little to disseminate the experience that the army

had gained in its various campaigns. As a result, a recurrent theme, which emerges from a study of Indian counterinsurgency campaigns, is the failure to learn lessons from the past. Instead, the army relied on an unwritten, ad hoc counterinsurgency doctrine, in articles written by army officers in professional journals, notably that of the United Services Institution. Doctrine was based initially on British theories and practice, notably from lessons learnt during the Malayan Emergency, which emphasized control of the population, isolating the guerrillas from popular support, and a study of Mao's theories on a people's war.[1]

TELANGANA

Within 13 months of independence in 1947, the Indian army was undertaking its first counterinsurgency operation against a communist-inspired peasant revolt in the Telangana region of the Princely State of Hyderabad, now Andhra Pradesh, which took place between 1946 and 1951. This revolt had flourished against the despotic rule of the Nizam, which included forced labor and feudal landlords. Employing intimidation, propaganda, and terror, the insurgents were able to control a large section of the state and establish an alternative government in some 2,000 villages. The communists expected their revolt would bring about a general revolution in India and issued a call for the workers to seize power, believing that "Hyderabad would be one base for the expanding military conquest of the country." The guerrillas also ambushed the Nizam's police and military forces, obtaining ammunition and weapons. When the Indian government took control of Hyderabad in September 1948, the insurgents stepped up their terrorist activity from their sanctuaries in the forest. The Indian troops operated in a counterinsurgency role for about a year and, defeated by superior and well-equipped forces, the insurgents took refuge in the local forests but eventually sued for peace. The movement died down after the creation of the state of Andhra Pradesh. However, Maoist splinter groups such as the banned People's War Group continued the struggle, not only in Andhra Pradesh, but also in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Orissa. The campaign had no impact on the army's doctrine, which still concentrated on conventional warfare.[2]

NAGALAND

The North-East Frontier region of India now consists of the "seven sisters"—the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, and Meghalaya. Of these Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya were originally part of Assam.

Although the Naga Revolt had been simmering since August 1947, it started to make headlines in the newspapers in 1956 and the progress of the Indian counterinsurgency campaign influenced all subsequent conflicts in the northeast and other regions. Unlike the communists in Telangana, the Naga insurgents were not motivated by ideology but by a more modest demand, that of an independent state (*Nagalim*) for their tribal homeland, based on their cultural and ethnic identity, separate from India. It would comprise not only the state of Nagaland but also parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Manipur, alienating other tribals, such as the Kuki, Meiteis, and Zo, who also occupied these areas. The thickly forested mountains of the North-East Frontier of the British Empire stretching from Bhutan to the Indian-Burma border were inhabited by a host of Indo-Mongoloid tribal groups, who had rarely given trouble or resisted governmental control. The region was isolated and remained undeveloped, and the British maintained a minimal presence and left the tribes to themselves. There was strong resentment by the Nagas of the Indian government's intrusion into tribal areas and their traditional way of life. After independence in 1947, the Nagas with several other tribal groups in the northeast refused to become part of India and launched a rebellion.[3]

As early as 1928, the Nagas requested that their district be kept separate from India and in 1946 formed the Naga National Council (NNC) to emphasize their separate identity. Their main demands were the unity of all Naga tribes, separate electorates (the Muslims of India already had them), safeguards for their interests, and local autonomy within the Assam province of free India. In 1950, the new Indian government formed some of the tribal areas of the northeast, including part of the Naga region, into the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA), later renamed Arunachal Pradesh. Nagas were thus split between the NEFA and the state of Manipur. Following independence, Jawaharlal Nehru's new Indian government hammered out an agreement in June 1947 that gave the Nagas tribal autonomy and the NNC became responsible for the collection of taxes and their expenditure as a 10-year interim government. After a ballot, this agreement was ratified by a small majority after much opposition among the Nagas led by Angami Zapu Phizo, who emerged as their most powerful leader, having been released from prison for collaborating with the Japanese in the Indian National Army.[4]

On August 14, 1947, disowning the agreement, Phizo declared independence and launched the insurgency. Phizo was arrested and jailed but on his release in 1949 led the secessionist movement with ability, charisma, and vigor. Becoming president of the NNC in 1950, he employed its constitutional authority to spread his influence, notably organizing a referendum in May 1951 and claiming 99 percent support for independence. Nagas' support for his demands was made clear when they boycotted

elections for the Assam Assembly and Parliament in 1951–52. The situation was exacerbated by the Assam police who employed excessive force against Nagas, notably in two incidents in late 1952 and on April 4, 1953, in a raid on the home of a prominent Naga leader. This was followed by searches in several villages, which led to arrests and the seizure of arms. Many moderate Nagas were alienated, and some groups began to prepare for a full-scale insurgency, which started in 1953. The Assam government had failed to foresee these developments and acted slowly and inadequately to support and protect moderate Nagas.[5]

The insurgents launched guerrilla attacks on the Assam Rifles (local paramilitaries), police posts, officials, and villagers in search of weapons, in addition to derailing trains, ambushing convoys on the roads and tracks, and destroying communications such as bridges. Selective killings; kidnappings; and massacres of moderates, officials, and loyal supporters of the Assam government took place. In March 1956 the insurgents set up their own alternative government, which requisitioned food, money, and supplies from the villages. The local police, government officials, and politicians often colluded with the insurgent infrastructure. A Naga army, the Naga Home Guard, later renamed the Naga Federal Army, was raised, organized, and trained by ex-soldiers and deserters from the Assam Rifles, the Assam Regiment, and the Assam police on conventional lines and at first attempted to hold territory employing well-prepared defensive positions. But, once the Nagas had been dislodged and dispersed, with their background of tribal warfare they proved much more adept at small-unit guerrilla tactics, using their knowledge of the terrain. Trained in the use of tribal weapons such as the spear and bow and arrow, the Nagas also had large quantities of ammunition and small arms that had been abandoned by the Japanese, and they later received arms from China and Pakistan. The rebels also received training in East Pakistan and used Burma as a sanctuary, slipping across the frontier.[6]

In April 1956 the army was sent in to quell the insurgency and the 181st Independent Infantry Brigade was deployed in support of the Assam Rifles and the Assam police. The army began to target the rebel bases in fortified, hill-top villages to deprive the rebels of the ability to launch substantial attacks. During intensive operations conducted throughout the winter, the army at a cost of around 300 casualties searched villages, demolished the insurgent bases, and arrested some 4,000, while a further 3,000 surrendered voluntarily. However, large numbers of guerrillas escaped into the jungle and, although unable to mount large-scale raids, continued to operate from their jungle camps and hideouts and to receive underground support from the villages. Eventually three other brigades were sent and formed the 23rd (Mountain) Division, which between 1960 and 1962 took over responsibility for operations in Nagaland (Operation *Orchid*). The troops were instructed by the politicians to use

minimum force, acting in aid of the civil power, but were far from gentle. For example, in July 1956 two soldiers from the Second Sikh Battalion shot and killed Dr. Haralu, a Naga political leader. This caused an outraged prime minister (Jawaharlal Nehru), aware of the political damage of such actions both internally and externally, to protest to the defense minister and the head of the army.[7]

Nothing epitomizes more the power of the central government in the northeast (and indeed in the Punjab and Kashmir) than the draconian Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) of 1958. This provides the legal basis for deploying the Indian army into "disturbed areas," giving it powers to detain and interrogate suspects and granting them general immunity for their actions. For many critics, AFSPA remains controversial, allowing the replacement of normal electoral democracy with a military state governed by unelected and unrepresentative security forces, who are shielded when committing atrocities or using illegal methods and thus able to violate the law with impunity. India faces the question of whether it can maintain its democracy while tackling the insurgencies in the northeast and elsewhere.[8]

Nehru and his government perceived the Nagas as misguided fellow-countrymen whose "hearts and minds" had to be won over and reconciled to the government with "minimum force," rather than punished with reprisals or by having their villages burnt as had happened under the British colonial administration. However, there was widespread employment of atrocities and torture by the army in the initial stages and villages were burnt. Moreover, army officers continued to complain about restrictions on the use of force, such as air and artillery support, being imposed on the army by politicians. The army continued to display a fondness for a "kinetic" response, but it adopted gradually a doctrine of "minimal force" as it was realized that the use of heavy weapons was counterproductive. During the 1980s army officers no longer advocated a military solution or victory and instead now believed that only a political solution was feasible. The mantra of the "political solution of insurgency" was the army's answer to an increasingly glaring contradiction between the army's preferred function and its role during counterinsurgency campaigns. The army's desire to concentrate on training for a large-unit conventional war against the external threat of China or Pakistan was incompatible with the need to conduct internal insurgencies, which it was increasingly recognized required small-unit operations to fight the guerrillas at their own game.[9]

Borrowing from the British experience in Malaya, a scheme was introduced in the Sema area in early 1957 to resettle the population from the small villages into larger, grouped villages, which were established under army control. Movement by the villagers was severely restricted to stop them from supporting the insurgents. A double stockade and a guard

provided security for loyal Nagas and to isolate the insurgents' underground support. These villages were given some basic amenities, such as water and food supplies and medical facilities. The program was not a success, however, as it could not be applied to the whole region owing to logistical difficulties and complaints from moderate Naga leaders. The villages were unpopular because they were unsympathetic to the culture of the Nagas, notably the burial in ancestral homes and their reliance on cultivation of widespread fields, as the villagers were resettled away from their homes and fields. The scheme was abandoned toward the end of 1958. The army resorted to regular patrolling instead to protect the villages. In 1963 resettlement was recommenced after the Nagaland State government proposed grouping all the villages in the Kohima and Mokokchung districts into 90 large villages. This ambitious plan, costing 20 million rupees, was not carried out, although some villages, which were supporting the guerrillas, were resettled as a punishment.[10]

Large-scale cordon-and-search operations were regularly conducted to isolate the guerrillas from the population, identify and capture insurgents using the villages as hideouts, gather intelligence, search for weapons, and provide a government "presence." The Indian army continued to employ large units, such as companies and battalions, which were very clumsy, often ambushed, and rarely achieved any notable successes against the guerrillas. This operation was in contrast to the small-unit operations carried out by platoons or four-man or five-man teams, which were employed by the British in Malaya and subsequent campaigns. The army rarely occupied villages on a long-term basis to prevent infiltration by the rebels and instead relied on the establishment of posts, manned by large units, to dominate and control the towns, roads, and jungle. However, Naga militias were raised to guard the villages and defend them against the insurgents. Many posts were reliant on air supply or convoys by road, which were vulnerable to attack. Coordination of intelligence and the civil and military policies was often poor so that army operations often lacked the necessary information and direction to make them successful.[11]

Later, during the 1960s, the security forces developed more effective tactics. In particular, the use of helicopters meant that the slow-moving sweeps could be abandoned and troops inserted into the jungle to act quickly on intelligence giving the location of guerrilla bands. While overcoming earlier problems with mobility, these operations did little to change the prevailing mind-set and the basic doctrine. In August 1963, the 8th (Mountain) Division was raised to coordinate the counterinsurgency campaign in Nagaland. Its nine battalions were given specific areas and villages to control, working to establish good relations with the loyal Nagas and to understand their culture, attacking the insurgent underground infrastructure, and establishing welfare schemes, notably medical

and sports facilities. By the late 1960s, the division deployed 36 infantry battalions as the policy of holding specific areas was expanded. Troops were also sent into the jungle to seal the borders, preventing rebels leaving for training in Pakistan and China and the flow of weapons into India. A jungle warfare training school had been set up at Dehradun in the 1950s, but few units were trained there. Now, the counterinsurgency school was established at Vairangte in the Mizo Hills by the Eastern Command in September 1968 to train the infantry. In May 1970, this became the Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School, which trained not only all units of the army for two months prior to serving in the northeast but also the state police forces. But the emphasis in training was on jungle survival skills and tribal languages and customs rather than on small-unit tactics. From 1968, the army also experimented with the new, so-called I or insurgency battalions, which were "lighter" than the standard infantry battalion, for counterinsurgency operations. But in December 1970, these battalions were reconverted to the standard infantry organization so that they could fight in a conventional war against China or Pakistan. By the 1970s there was increasing recognition that small-unit tactics were needed to defeat guerrillas but conventional warfare against external threats remained the main role, preventing any substantial change in doctrine. Counterinsurgency was still seen as being a subsidiary role, and the army was unwilling to change its basic ethos, putting an emphasis on political resolution of insurgencies instead. In the early 1970s, Indian security forces committed atrocities on a large scale against the Nagas. As the police had a poor image, being considered corrupt and coercive, counterinsurgency was devolved to paramilitaries controlled by the Ministry of Home Affairs, notably the Border Security Force (BSF), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Assam Rifles, and the Rashtriya Rifles (National Rifles). This allowed the army to focus on its main role. Nevertheless, the number of armed police battalions doubled in Indian states between 1963 and 1983 from 66 to 144, highlighting the trend toward coercive power.[12]

In the end a political solution was seen as the answer. The Indian government sought to end the insurgency rather than destroy the insurgents, attempting to reconcile the rebels and remove their grievances. Seeking to buttress and rally the moderates and persuade them to give up the demand for independence, the government employed various measures: development of the region, a general amnesty, and the release of Naga detainees. In December 1957 the formation of the Naga Hills–Tuensang Area united the various Naga areas into one administrative unit for the first time. On August 1, 1960, Nehru proclaimed the establishment of Nagaland as a new state, which was inaugurated on December 1, 1963, giving the Naga the autonomy that they had demanded and marginalizing the extremists. The State of Nagaland Act passed by Parliament in

1962 protected the Nagas' religion, tribal law, ownership of land, and resources.[13]

Attempts to broker a long-standing peace from April 1964 failed, however, and the army resumed operations in mid-1968, systematically destroying the camps and hideouts of the rebels who splintered into various factional groups. The border with Burma was also sealed with the support of the Burmese government to prevent infiltration of Nagas trained by the Chinese. The Naga Regiment was formed in 1970 to answer their demand for a distinctive representation in the army. Together with the Assam Regiment, it also provided local knowledge and language skills. The formation of Bangladesh in 1971 allowed the destruction of training centers and the capture of the insurgents and their leaders based in East Pakistan. This was a major blow to the insurgents who signed a peace agreement at Shillong in November 1975, agreeing to bring about a peaceful solution to the Naga problem and to disarm. Nevertheless, in the early 1980s the banned National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) became the ascendant insurgent group across the northeast, where various factions continued to mount attacks in Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland. The NSCN established links in Bangladesh with the military junta and with the Chin National Front, the Kachin Independent Army, and the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) in Myanmar to obtain arms and sanctuaries. In June 1981 Indian troops in hot pursuit of NSCN insurgents moved deep into Burma. The bases in Burma were lost in 1991–92 when the Burmese army launched attacks to dislodge them. A cease-fire was finally signed by the NSCN in July 1997, but the insurgency has continued into the twenty-first century, and, having begun in the 1950s, lasted over 50 years. The government has failed to find a long-term political solution to the Naga demand for independence for a Greater Nagaland.[14]

MIZORAM

The Mizos (Highlanders) rebelled in February 1966, unleashing Operation *Jericho*, protesting against the lack of development of the Mizo Hills District and the rejection in October 1965 of their demand for independence. The failure of the Assam government to provide adequate famine relief in 1958–59 led to the formation of the Mizo National Famine Front, which soon became a political organization, the Mizo National Front (MNF), demanding an independent Greater Mizoram. Further grievances were the imposition of the Assamese language by the Assam government and the curbing of the powers held by the tribal chiefs under British rule. Their leader, Pu Laldenga, formed a guerrilla army, the Mizo National Army (MNA), which trained in the neighboring Chittagong Hills of East Pakistan and received weapons from China via Burma.

Laldenga formed his own government and following the failure of the rebellion in February 1966, which broke up the MNA, launched his insurgency. Driven from the Mizo Hills, the Mizos took to the jungle in small bands using classic guerrilla tactics and often operated from sanctuaries in the Chittagong Hills. They killed and intimidated *vais* (non-Mizos), informers and supporters of the government; ambushed the security forces; raided armories; and attacked posts held by the BSF and the Assam Rifles. A clandestine organization collected funds, recruits, and supplies from the towns and villages while providing external training and arms for the insurgents.[15]

The 61st (Mountain) Brigade arrived in March 1966 to crush the revolt. Harsh measures were employed by the troops, which together with an air raid on Aizawl by the air force further alienated the population.

In an attempt to learn lessons from the failure in Nagaland, an ambitious program of resettling the population (Operation *Accomplishment*) in three phases began in January 1967. More than 200,000 people (65 percent of the population) were forcibly resettled into Protected and Progressive Villages (PPVs) before the scheme was abandoned in 1970 after local political parties and human rights groups had challenged the constitutionality of the scheme in the Assam High Court. But the damage had been done, creating a sullen resentment, which took years to alleviate. The army continued to employ large-scale cordon-and-search operations, which were no more successful than in the 1950s and labeled by one senior officer as a waste of time.

In a variation on the French *quadrillange*, posts were established across the entire region and battalions of the security forces were allotted sectors to comb and encouraged to "fraternize" with the local population to "win hearts and minds." The BSF manned posts along the border to cut off external support. Mobile units patrolled the areas between, harassing the guerrillas and denying them rest and the initiative. Collective punishment and restrictions on movement and food were also used but, being deeply resented, alienated rather than won "hearts and minds." Some generals, such as Mathew Thomas and "Sam" Manekshaw (Eastern Command), emphasized the use of minimum force to win over the populace while employing "guerrilla" rather than conventional tactics and helicopters to provide greater mobility and flexibility. The insurgency ebbed and flowed but never completely died out. When the formation of Bangladesh removed their sanctuaries, the guerrillas operated from the Arakan (Burma).[16]

Across the northeast the government sought to obtain a political solution, employing amnesties and pardons to induce insurgents to surrender and also recruiting former guerrillas into the paramilitaries. The political "carrot" was balanced by the "stick" in the form of a substantial increase in the manpower deployed against the insurgents. The Assam Rifles

expanded from 5 to 21 battalions in the three decades after 1950 and from 21 to 31 battalions between 1983 and 1988. The transformation of the Mizo Hills District into the Union Territory of Mizoram in January 1972, followed by the election of a popular government, brought a lull of two years. But in January 1975, having received training and arms in China, the MNF launched a new wave of attacks from bases in Bangladesh, unleashing a reign of terror in the countryside, notably against non-Mizos. A series of army operations, which by the end of 1975 had worn down the MNA, forced Laldenga to visit Delhi in 1976 for talks. The situation then developed into a stalemate. Laldenga eventually signed an accord in New Delhi with Rajiv Gandhi in June 1986, took part in elections as Mizoram became a state in February 1987, and was sworn in as the chief minister of Mizoram, ending the violence. Organized conflict on a large scale has been missing ever since in marked contrast to its neighbors. This peace was driven by the desire of the population for peace and the ability of a cohesive society, which incorporated the insurgents into the power structure, to reinstate the legitimacy of the state institutions.[17]

MANIPUR

Highly literate, the Meiteis were disgruntled by high unemployment and the high number of outsiders, who had flooded into the Manipur Valley, which was densely populated, underdeveloped, and poor in resources. Some 60,000 Nepali settlers joined Nagas, Mizos, and Kukis in the area. Such tensions spawned three insurgent movements. There were similar peasant movements in Tripura, Meghalaya, and Assam, whose primary aim was the expulsion of "outsiders." The first insurgency was launched in the Imphal valley in 1965 by the Revolutionary Government of Manipur, which established close links internally with the Mizo and Naga rebels and externally with China and Pakistan. It was eliminated within four years following the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971; most of its followers either surrendered or were rounded up by the security forces, and its leaders were imprisoned. Manipur became a state in March 1972. One of the leaders of the rebellion, N. Bisheshwar Singh, while in Agartala prison, made contact with Naxalite prisoners (militant Communists) and established links with China, forming the People's Liberation Army (PLA) after the Meitei rebels were freed in an amnesty in 1975. In 1978, the PLA launched an insurgency. Another group, the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (the old name for Manipur) was formed in 1979 with the aim of creating a "Socialist Sovereign State" in Manipur.[18]

All the Meitei extremist organizations, which sought the liberation of Manipur through armed revolution, were declared unlawful in

October 1979. In September 1980 the entire Imphal Valley was declared to be a "disturbed area" by the government of Manipur and the 23rd (Mountain) Division was brought in, launching various operations in conjunction with paramilitary forces to deal with the insurgency. The 8th (Mountain) Division took over the area in December 1980. In July 1981 Bisheshwar Singh was captured in his hideout, and in April 1982, his successor, Thoundam Kunjabihari, and his band were eliminated. Nevertheless, despite further successes such as the capture of another leader, Manikanta Singh, in March 1989 the insurgency continued with some support from Bangladesh, terrorizing the population, attacking police posts, and ambushing the security forces. Corruption and nepotism destroyed the effectiveness and morale of the police, leading to a breakdown in law and order. Efforts to bring the insurgents to the negotiating table failed, as unemployment, the lack of development, and the unavailability of land remained as long-term problems, providing recruits for the insurgents. Lack of coordination between the civil authorities and the military and explosive ethnic divisions between the different tribal groups have allowed the insurgency to continue to simmer into the twenty-first century. The abduction, torture, rape, and murder of one woman in Kangla, Manipur, in July 2004 by members of the Assam Rifles and the subsequent demonstrations made headlines in the local, national, and international press. Such incidents showed the reality of relations between the Indian security forces and the local Manipuri population, which suffered from extrajudicial killings, rape, sodomy, torture, disappearances, and illegal detention. Corruption in the state government and a grievance against the central government in New Delhi, which is perceived as being insensitive to Manipuri identity, has continued to fuel the insurgency.[19]

PUNJAB

Between 1978 and 1993, India fought a costly counterinsurgency campaign in the Punjab against Sikhs who sought to establish an independent Sikh state, Khalistan, supported by many Sikhs living abroad. The Sikhs feared a loss of their religious identity and also resented the loss of privileges, such as the reservation of seats for Sikhs in the state legislature and preferential treatment in the armed services, which had been enjoyed in the colonial period. From 1948 the demands of Shiromani Akali Dal (the organization formed in 1920 to create a Sikh-dominated state) for communal electorates and reserved seats in the legislatures were rejected by the central government. After the separation of the Punjab from Haryana and Himachal Pradesh in 1966, the Sikhs became its majority community, but in contrast to other states, which were reorganized along ethnic and

linguistic lines, the central government only agreed to the Punjab as a separate state for Punjabi-speakers in 1971. From 1973 the Akali Dal demanded greater economic, political, and religious autonomy and *Maha Punjab* (Greater Punjab) absorbing the Sikh areas of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan. Their perception of a Hindu-dominated India was reinforced by the efforts of Mrs. Indira Gandhi as prime minister to concentrate power in the central government, which culminated in the state of emergency between 1975 and 1977.[20]

Extremists led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale resorted to violence in the late 1970s. This created communal tension, driving Hindus out of the Punjab and forcing Sikhs living elsewhere to seek the safety of their "home" state. Armed with modern weapons by the Pakistanis, the rebels launched an insurgency, which included selective assassinations of Hindus and moderate Sikhs, large-scale sabotage, arson, the robbing of banks, attacks on railway stations, the hijacking of aircraft, and murder. The insurgents also used the *gurdwaras* (Sikh shrines) as sanctuaries, knowing that the government was reluctant to allow the security forces to enter them for fear of alienating the Sikh community. In particular, the holiest of Sikh shrines, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, was the headquarters and main arsenal of the rebels.[21]

Handicapped by poor recruitment, training, and equipment, the state police neglected intelligence gathering, a trend that was made worse by intimidation and assassinations by the insurgents. Cooperation with the army and paramilitaries was poor as the police were accused of being soft on the insurgents while the army was accused of being anti-Sikh. In response to the inability of the state authorities to control the situation, the Indian government imposed president's rule in October 1983 and sent in large numbers of the CRPF and the BSF to restore law and order. The deployment of paramilitaries was a mistake as they lacked local knowledge and operated clumsily using large, conventional forces in cordon-and-search operations, achieving very little while alienating the local community. By May 1984 it was clear that the main aim of the extremists was to drive non-Sikhs from the Punjab, a similar exodus to that from Pakistan in 1946–47. The crisis was brought to a head in June 1984. Following the rejection of a nationwide appeal by the prime minister, Mrs. Gandhi, on June 2, the army was sent in to stop the violence and to restore normality in the Punjab.[22]

Operation *Woodrose* was planned at very short notice by Western Command (Lieutenant-General Krishnaswamy Sundarji), which reinforced the BSF presence to close the border with Pakistan and brought in regular troops from four infantry divisions stationed outside the Punjab to tackle the rebel strongholds. To ensure close cooperation between the civil authorities and the military, Lieutenant-General Ranjit Singh Dayal (chief of staff, Western Command) was appointed as security adviser to the

governor of the Punjab. In the early hours of June 3, the troops were deployed to capture the rebels, their bases, and their arms. All civilian communications were cut off. At 9 p.m. a 36-hour curfew across the whole state was announced and selectively extended from day to day and strictly enforced. Forty-two religious sites had been identified as insurgent hideouts, including the Golden Temple, which was the main target, but tactical intelligence about the dispositions and strength of the terrorists was missing as a result of the speed with which the army's operations were launched.[23]

Orders were issued that the troops were not to damage any *gurdwara*, and attempts were made to induce the insurgents to give themselves up. The opposition was to be silenced by sheer weight of numbers and firepower, but continued resistance meant that the Golden Temple had to be stormed (Operation *Blue Star*) by the Ninth Infantry Division (Major-General Kuldip Singh Brar). This conventional assault supported by tanks on June 5 and 6 killed Bhindranwale and recovered many weapons and goods stolen by the insurgents in robberies. However, although the operation was successful in its immediate aims, its aftereffects were disastrous. Some 150 people, including many extremist leaders, escaped, and the assault on the holiest of Sikh shrines angered many Sikhs. Cordon-and-search operations in both rural and urban areas as part of Operation *Wood Rose* also alienated the Sikh population, which complained of brutality and torture and about the damage and looting inflicted by troops during searches. The immediate aftermath was ill-discipline and a number of mutinies and mass desertions by thousands of Sikh troops, who constituted some 10 percent of the army. The Punjab police was demoralized by the killings of policemen and was also badly infiltrated by the insurgents and as Sikhs were treated with suspicion by the Hindus of the CRPF. Both Indira Gandhi and General Arun Shridhar Vaidya (the prime minister and the chief of the army staff, respectively, at the time of Operation *Blue Star*) were subsequently assassinated in retaliation in October 1984 and August 1986, respectively. The death of Mrs. Gandhi led to murderous anti-Sikh riots, notably in New Delhi. The Congress Party also lost the elections held in the Punjab in 1985. The long-term aftermath was a decade of terrorism in the Punjab with the insurgency threatening to overwhelm the security forces during its peak between 1989 and 1992.[24]

The successful occupation of the Golden Temple once again (Operation *Black Thunder*) in May 1988 using special forces and the National Security Guard, in a well-planned assault based on good intelligence and conducted during a media blackout, was a major turning point. The militants, with their criminal behavior and desecration of the temple, lost the support of the Sikh population, splintering into various factions and internecine fighting. The insurgency continued to rumble on until 1993 as the

insurgent organization and leadership was wiped out by the coordinated operations of the army, paramilitaries, and a resurgent and reorganized police. Between May 1987 and February 1992, the Punjab was a police state under president's rule with a series of special laws that suspended the normal political process, allowing the security forces to employ draconian measures to contain the insurgency. Harsh "law and order" policing by local and central police forces was employed by J. F. Ribeiro and K. P. S. Gill, as director generals of the Punjab police. Gill, who declared an "open season on terrorists," is credited with ending Sikh extremism in the Punjab in the early 1990s. Gill was given control of the CRPF to restore closer coordination with the Punjab police, which was reorganized and supported by a "surge" of nine Indian army divisions, which were moved into the state. The army with the home guard, special police, and paramilitaries provided blanket security. The police provided better intelligence, often supplied by insurgents who had been "turned" and employed as informants or spies, and better policing of the border with Pakistan to stop the infiltration of men and supplies, aided by fencing along the frontier and an increased number of border outposts. There were massive human rights violations on both sides. The Punjab police employed counterterrorism—notably detention without charges and systematic torture and summary executions of thousands of Sikhs—which was encouraged by a bounty system of rewards for police who killed known insurgents. Nevertheless, the Sikh community turned against the insurgents who adopted increasingly desperate tactics such as indiscriminate terrorist attacks against cinemas, buses, trains, and railway stations. There was also a revitalization of the political process, with elections being held in 1985 and 1992 following an accord signed in 1985 with Harcharan Longowal, a moderate Sikh leader. Diplomatic efforts were also made to cut off support from Pakistan and the Sikh diaspora overseas.[25]

SRI LANKA, 1987–90

In August 1987, for domestic political reasons, the Indian government sent the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPFK) to Sri Lanka. Operation *Pawan* (fresh breeze)—its only experience of a counterinsurgency campaign outside India—was intended to broker a peace settlement following the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord of July 1987. This was perceived as a solution to the constant flow of Tamil refugees (some 200,000 to 300,000) into India fleeing operations of the Sri Lankan army against Tamil militants, which imposed an increasing burden on the state of Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Tigers (the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or LTTE) sought to establish *Eelam* (a Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka). Indian troops had been sent to Sri Lanka before in early 1971 to secure Colombo airport against

a Maoist insurgency. However, the IPKF's mission was doomed from the beginning as neither side was interested in a peace settlement. The Sri Lankan security forces were less than happy about the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord and the introduction of the IPKF. The political failure to obtain the agreement of the Tamil Tigers to the accord led to conflict with them, which cost the Indian army 1,155 dead and a total of some 4,000 casualties. The support of the Tamils, initially welcoming, was slowly eroded. Intelligence was poor, and there was no effective police force to provide local knowledge or gather intelligence. A unified command structure was also missing, and there was little attempt to win the propaganda war with the LTTE. Experts in the employment of explosives and in picking off Indian officers, the Tamil Tigers proved to be far more vicious than the Mizos or Nagas.[26]

In October 1987, the Fifty-Fourth Infantry Division was deployed to clear the Jaffna area, suffering considerable casualties from ambushes, IEDs, mines, and booby traps as the LTTE changed its strategy from a conventional defensive war to a guerrilla war once the battle for Jaffna had been lost. The Tamil Tigers who had escaped into the jungle then adopted a strategy of outlasting and wearing down the IPKF while undermining Indian political support for the intervention, employing traditional guerrilla tactics such as hit-and-run attacks and well-prepared ambushes. An excellent intelligence network allowed the LTTE to remain ahead of the Indians who relied on large units in fruitless cordon-and-search operations, which blundered blindly around the jungle and limited their flexibility, encouraged a propensity to stick to the roads, and discouraged initiative at lower levels. Attempts to "win hearts and minds" with "civic action" floundered on a shortage of funds and poor coordination with Indian civilian administrators and with Sri Lankan officials, which severely handicapped initiatives such as the Citizen's Volunteer Force, a local police force raised in Jaffna. The IPKF was unable to gain popular support among the Tamils who were ruthlessly intimidated by the LTTE. Eventually three more divisions (4th, 6th, and 57th) were sent to Sri Lanka to ensure that elections were held and to secure the return of the refugees from India. But there was no unified command to coordinate the operations, while the troops lacked training in basic counterinsurgency tactics and equipment, notably helicopters, to provide tactical mobility, given the use of IEDs by the Tamil Tigers. There was also poor intelligence, which ensured, tactically, that the series of sweeps through the jungle, such as Operation *Checkmate* in May 1988, proved unsuccessful. Eventually, the IPKF withdrew in March 1990, having failed to defeat the Tamil insurgents, as political support in India for intervention evaporated. Having failed to learn from the lessons of previous campaigns, the IPKF did little to disseminate any lessons learnt in Sri Lanka, preferring, like the Americans after Vietnam, to forget all about it, having to relearn them once again in Kashmir.[27]

KASHMIR

Indian and Pakistani rivalry over control of Kashmir, part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, had culminated in full-scale conventional warfare in 1947–48, 1965, and 1971. Following the 1947–48 clash, India had to contend with control of one-third of Kashmir (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, POK) by Pakistan, which resented Indian occupation of the rest. Pakistan viewed the loss of a Muslim majority state on its borders to India as a terrible loss of prestige, after the similar loss of Hyderabad and Junagadh. Similarly, the Indian government feared that Kashmir's departure from India would set off powerful separatist forces in other parts of the nation. This led to acrimony and tension. In 1965 Pakistan invaded Kashmir with tribal troops supported by its own regulars (Operation *Gibraltar*), believing that the local population would assist them with a mass uprising, which was a very mistaken assumption. Nevertheless, discontent with unemployment and the loss of autonomy within India continued inside Kashmir. By 1970 terrorism and violence such as the hijacking of aircraft were increasing, but the defeat of Pakistan in 1971 and the subsequent creation of Bangladesh followed by the Kashmir Accord of February 1975, which gave extra autonomy to the state, ensured relative quiet until the elections of 1987. Focusing on the growing disillusionment with the central and state governments, these elections were a turning point, lighting the spark that turned into full insurgency.[28]

Local Kashmiri were recruited, trained, armed with sophisticated weapons and indoctrinated in camps in POK and Pakistan and then infiltrated back into Kashmir to support the insurrection. The main aim of the insurgents was to widen the gap between the local population and the government, building on grievances with the administrations in both New Delhi and Srinagar. The cooperation of the local community was obtained by a combination of intimidation and ideological exhortation to support the "liberation struggle" and exploit popular dissatisfaction with the government and the political system. The insurgency was launched by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front in August 1988. Discontent in Kashmir simmered until it finally erupted in 1989 with the emergence of the People's Republic of Independent Kashmir against a corrupt government, poverty, and a lack of development. The insurgency included attacks on security forces; intelligence personnel and informers; bombings; civil disobedience; demonstrations; strikes; the kidnapping of foreign visitors; and the selective assassination and intimidation of officials, Hindus, loyalists, and moderate leaders of the Kashmiri community. It was accompanied by a "media blitz," fanning separatist attitudes and exploiting the growing polarization between Hindus and Muslims. Local, indigenous fighters were later supported by fundamentalists recruited from Afghanistan, Algeria, Chechnya, Saudi Arabia, and the Sudan and

in turn supported by al-Qaeda. The initial reaction of business-as-usual by the state government in Kashmir and the central government in New Delhi, treating the symptoms rather than the causes of the insurgency, as well as some of the behavior of the security forces, notably some paramilitary forces, exacerbated the situation. Particularly notable was an incident when 50 civilians were killed by the CRPF in a firefight with insurgents in Srinagar on January 19, 1990, and the killing of 40 people in Sopore by the BSF on January 6, 1993. The two paramilitary organizations, the CRPF and the BSF, although poorly armed and trained, were hastily deployed to quell the uprising. Lacking knowledge of or sensitivity toward local customs, their behavior was inept, clumsy, and harsh. The local police were also ill-equipped and poorly trained for curbing the violence and providing the crucial intelligence on the insurgent organization, suffering heavy casualties and being infiltrated by the insurgents. The police became demoralized and neutralized, even going on strike in January 1990. Finally, in January 1990, the army was deployed to bring the deteriorating situation under control and as a symbol of India's resolve to retain Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of the country. It has been there ever since. Owing to the reluctance of the army to undertake internal security duties, which damaged its ability to fight conventional wars, battalions of the Assam Rifles were deployed. A special paramilitary force, the Rashtriya Rifles, was also created in 1990 as a dedicated counterinsurgency unit, developing an acquaintance with the terrain and an ability to gather intelligence and employing former insurgents but also becoming infamous among Kashmiris for human rights violations. The Special Operations Group also acquired a bad reputation for its excesses. The use of conventional methods, notably cordon-and-search operations, also alienated the local population.[29]

After a stalemate in 1991–92 in which the insurgents targeted civilians (Hindus and Sikhs as well as Muslim moderates) and intelligence and police personnel while both sides attempted to establish supremacy, 1993–94 constituted the turning point. The army presence increased, and the resulting pressure on the insurgents began to tell. The appointment of General K. V. Krishna Rao as governor of Jammu and Kashmir in March 1993 provided leadership, a more coordinated strategy, improved intelligence, and an overhaul of the police force. The Kashmir Monitoring Group, an Intelligence Coordination Committee, and the Unified Headquarters with representatives from the state government and the security forces were established to coordinate the counterinsurgency campaign. The concept of unified command had been evolved during the highly successful Operation *Rhino* in Assam to provide close cooperation between the civilian and military leaders. Attempts were made to ensure that minimum force was used in security operations so as not to alienate the local community and thus generate more volunteers for the insurgents—a strategy known as "the iron

fist in the velvet glove." Nevertheless, on a number of occasions, the paramilitaries, lacking training and tending to overreact to insurgent attacks, lost control and alienated the local community further. There were human rights violations on both sides, but military excesses, implementing a "Punjab solution," such as detention, disappearances, custodial torture and killings, rape, and desecration of holy shrines, increased anti-Indian feeling and alienated the population. By the mid-1990s, a brutal counterinsurgency campaign, which displayed little regard for human rights, had decimated the insurgents, who were replaced by a new professional generation of rebels driven by the desire to avenge the Indian excesses. They were aided by so-called guest militants, notably Pakistanis, Afghans, and Arabs. Large-scale cordon-and-search operations, which alienated the population, were replaced by more clinical and focused operations based on good intelligence. As in previous campaigns, "a grid system" was employed, dividing the region into sectors, which were garrisoned and supported by quick reaction teams (QRTs) as a mobile reserve. The security forces were deployed in three layers to prevent the infiltration of insurgents from Pakistan. Former insurgents were used to gather intelligence and to bolster village security as part of Village Defence Committees (VDCs), identifying rebels and their supporters. Counterinsurgency and jungle warfare schools were established at Khrew in 1994 and later at Sarol and Bhaderwah to train units that were deployed to Kashmir.[30]

Learning lessons from previous operations, which reinforced convictions about the importance of minimum use of force and of "winning hearts and minds," the Indian army realized the importance of innovation. From 1997 it implemented the strategy of what a former chief of staff, General J. J. Singh, termed the "iron fist on velvet glove," in Jammu and Kashmir. This strategy combined counterinsurgency operations with activities for "winning hearts and minds" through civic action, known as Operation *Sadhbhavana* (Goodwill), which was launched in 1998. The "civic aid" included providing basic amenities, computer centers, medical care, hostels, orphanages, new roads, and schools to people in rural areas, education, trips to New Delhi to see Republic day celebrations, and the empowerment of women. Along with an improved human rights record, the operation seems to have improved the image of the Indian army among the population of Jammu and Kashmir and helped to erase memories of the army's harsh response to the insurgency and to wrestle the initiative from the insurgents.[31]

The most important lesson was the crucial importance of finding a political solution to the insurgency. Civic, economic, political, and social action was taken, and elections were held in 1996 to "win the hearts and minds" of the population. Nevertheless, the insurgency spread from the Valley of Kashmir to the mountains of Jammu. By 1998 the Pakistan government changed its strategy and began talks with India, the

"bus diplomacy," which led to the Lahore Declaration in February 1999. The insurgency continued in Kashmir, but the Indian counterinsurgency campaign succeeded in reducing the levels of terrorist violence and infiltration from Pakistan by 2008. The massive anti-infiltration operations and the construction of a fence along the 734-kilometer border during 2002–4 enabled the situation to be brought under control, but attacks, notably using IEDs and grenades, continued. Efforts were also made to "assimilate the state into India," improve the efficiency of the government, and provide greater industrial development. There was a renewed emphasis on a professional and humane approach, using minimum force during counterinsurgency operations. But the militants remain at large, ensuring that the security environment continues to be troubled. Once again the Indians had to relearn the lessons of previous campaigns, although global scrutiny and criticism and the global threat from *jihadi* (Islamic fundamentalist) terrorists had made success more difficult than ever.[32]

NAXALITES

Following the killing of 11 people when police fired into a crowd in the village of Naxalbari in West Bengal on May 25, 1967, sporadic, agrarian uprisings erupted in the rural areas of the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Adopting guerrilla warfare tactics, the communist-led peasant revolt attempted to seize power through a Maoist armed struggle, killing "class enemies" such as landlords and the police. Between 1967 and 1972, this rural insurgency, notably in Birbhum, Srikakulam, and West Medinipur, was put down by the states with the assistance of central paramilitaries and the army. Raids by the security forces on villages and rebel camps based on good intelligence were employed to kill or capture the guerrilla leaders and their supporters. Operation *Steeplechase* (July–August 1971) in the bordering districts of Bihar, Orissa, and West Bengal employed a cordon-and-search strategy in which the army cordoned off and sealed the area while the state police, using their local knowledge, carried out the searches. Many insurgents fled the towns and villages to the forests and hills where they were hunted down by the security forces. State governments relocated villagers to "resettlement camps" to destroy the guerrilla infrastructure and isolate them from the local communities. The Naxalites lacked the weapons to engage the police and army and also failed to mobilize mass participation, either by establishing a secure base or an infrastructure within the local population. An urban insurgency in Calcutta was also suppressed. Entire sections of the city were cordoned off and searched, and large numbers of suspects were detained. By the beginning

of 1973, most of the Naxalites had been arrested, killed, or surrendered, although the brutality of the repression, employing illegal detentions, police torture, suspicious deaths while held in custody, and extrajudicial killings by "death squads" of criminals, overshadowed the successful counterinsurgency campaign. Atrocities had been committed on a large scale during this brutal crackdown.[33]

In the 1990s the Naxalite movement, having fragmented into at least 40 groups during the 1970s and 1980s, began to rebuild and reorganize. The Naxalites mobilized mass support in rural areas and recruited in the villages. Despite a growing national economy, many of the problems, which had underpinned the peasant unrest of the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as political corruption, the lack of effective land reform, social oppression of *dalits* (untouchables) according to caste, and abuses by landlords, still remain. The lack of development and effective governance combined with widespread poverty in large areas of rural India has allowed the Naxalites to thrive. In large swathes of the countryside in states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, the Naxalite insurgency threatens to undermine national integrity and prosperity from within. In the forests of the remote tribal regions, the Naxalites have filled a "law and order vacuum" where the administration of the states and the central government is either marginal at best or totally absent at worst. In these no-go areas where officials and the police fear to tread, the insurgents have set up their own alternative institutions and government. Sporadic uprisings and attacks on "class enemies," the police and officials, continued, and, despite repression by the states, the insurgency continued to smolder and to expand during the 1990s and into the twenty-first century. Controlling large areas of countryside in a "Red Corridor" stretching from Nepal to Tamil Nadu, the Naxalites have killed thousands of Indian civilians and security forces. This problem has increased in intensity to such an extent that the Indian prime minister, Manmohan Singh, announced in April 2006 that the Maoist insurgency was "the single biggest internal security threat facing the country." Support for the Naxalites was increased by the brutality of the police and *senas* (private militias) employed by landlords in the countryside to commit extrajudicial killings of rebels, landless peasants, and *dalits* and other low-caste laborers suspected of supporting insurgent groups. Naxalite operations were supported by "taxes" raised from officials, contractors, businesses, and industries, allowing the acquisition of modern weapons and explosives. The Naxalites forged links with external insurgent groups, notably the LTTE (Sri Lanka), the Liberation Army of Peru, and the Kurdistan Workers' Party, procuring equipment and training. They also created an umbrella organization, the Coordination Committee of

Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA), to integrate Maoist activities in South Asia.[34]

Naxalite terrorism, such as attacks on the police, officials, the "rural rich," and landlords and the increasing use of bombs, expanded from affecting 14 states and 165 districts in 2005 to 18 states and 194 districts in 2007 and to 20 states and 182 districts by 2012. The attempts of the Ministry of Home Affairs to coordinate and improve state police capabilities in maintaining law and order have been constrained by constitutional limitations on its powers to intervene in internal security matters. This has resulted in the failure to develop a unified command or a cohesive national strategy. The ministry also lacks a counterinsurgency doctrine, which would complement the Indian army's *Doctrine for Sub-Conventional Operations* and provide guidance for and integration of state policies, although the government of Chhattisgarh has established the counterterrorism and jungle warfare college in Kanker to train the police in guerrilla warfare. But the ministry has set up its own Naxal Management Division to improve coordination between itself and the various states affected by the insurgency and a number of committees to improve interagency cooperation and communication and the sharing of intelligence. In October 2004 a task force was established under the chairman of Special Internal Security to create and coordinate strategy with the key representatives of central and state governments. In the states most affected by the insurgency—Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Orissa—the poor performance of the police, which remain short of equipment, funds, personnel, and expertise, is a major problem, notably in the collection of intelligence. Efforts to remedy this situation have proved difficult to find, but the government has provided money for the Police Modernization Scheme to re-equip and train the state police in 20 specialized counterinsurgency and antiterrorist (CIAT) schools run by the army and to fortify police stations. The employment of central security forces (some 36 battalions of paramilitaries by 2010; 40 by 2012) provides extra manpower, but they lack knowledge of the local culture, terrain and politics, and access to intelligence that only the state police are able to provide, using their indigenous expertise. Funds from the central government create forces such as the Indian Reserve Battalions (29 by 2012) from local populations to provide security, persuade insurgents to surrender and then rehabilitate them, underpin social and economic development through the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), and compensate the kin of those killed by Maoists. Joint operations by state police forces have been institutionalized as Operation *Green Hunt*. Other intended remedies have been harmful. In 2005, the Chhattisgarh state government formed the *Salwa Judum* (Purification Hunt), "a local citizen's defence committee," which abused its power with burnings, killings,

looting and rapes, harassment of suspected Naxalite supporters, raids on villages, and forced resettlement of villagers into camps. Much of this activity was a vigilante response rather than intelligence-led strikes at particular identified targets. Such behavior not only failed to contain the guerrillas but also escalated the levels of violence, creating an internal civil war between the *Salwa Judum* and the Naxalites and providing for the rebels from a population already alienated by the corruption of the state government. Similarly, in Jharkhand, the state police adopted the "Gill formula"—the strict "law and order" policing by local and central police forces employed by K. P. S. Gill, the police officer who is credited with ending Sikh extremism in the Punjab in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Another model for an improved counterinsurgency strategy is the example of Andhra Pradesh, which in 1989 created the Greyhounds, an elite paramilitary force, to prowl the forests. Trained in counterinsurgency, this force achieved some important successes based on good intelligence and a unified command. Improvements in the gathering and dissemination of intelligence allowed security operations to target the insurgents and their infrastructure. Good results were also achieved by encouraging Naxalites to surrender and be rehabilitated.[35]

CONCLUSION

The army found the task of dealing with insurgents, such as the Nagas, Mizos, or Meitei, "most distasteful," as they were difficult to identify and did not fight on equal terms, attacking without warning or remorse and then melting away into the countryside. The effectiveness of the counterinsurgency campaigns fought by the Indian army was reduced by a strong bias toward conventional warfare. Nevertheless, India has yet to lose a counterinsurgency campaign on its own territory. The Indian army's doctrine developed the theme that the political nature of guerrilla warfare was paramount, stressing the impossibility of obtaining a military victory against insurgencies and the need to find a political solution instead. It emphasized the use of minimum force to prevent the alienation of the population. It manages in each insurgency, after much unnecessary trial and error, to discover the correct combination of military success against the rebels and political reconciliation with the local community to contain the violence and restore "normalcy," democracy, and law and order. India's experiences and struggles with the complexity of counterinsurgency suggest that even for a democracy like India integrating civilian agencies and military organizations is a much more difficult task than is often appreciated.[36]

The main problem for India in combating insurgencies remains that of unified command and the issue of coordinating a cohesive strategy.

Not only is there a split of responsibility between the central and state governments but also historical fissures between the Ministry of Defense, which controls the Indian army, and the Ministry of Home Affairs, which directs the paramilitary forces. This structure, which allows political interference and parochial turf wars for power and finance, makes it difficult to develop and implement any coherent strategy. The army has traditionally always been more interested in training to fight an external threat rather than an internal one and therefore reluctant to commit either resources or troops to internal security. Equally, attempts to "win hearts and minds" in the northeast and Kashmir foundered on the inability to satisfy the popular demand for greater political autonomy and during the struggle with the Naxalites faltered as a result of the failure to improve the lot of the rural poor. This ensures that the insurgencies have continued to smolder and erupt as the grievances remain. Insurgencies are often contained by the combination of the "carrot" of development programs and the "stick" of the deployment of large numbers of security troops, but these were short-term rather than long-term solutions to deep-rooted problems that caused the insurgency in the first place. Without these long-term solutions, the insurgencies in the Kashmir, in the northeast, and by the Naxalites have continued to drag on. They simmer away and occasionally boil over, causing the Indian government to take expedient action without ever addressing the core issues or challenging the status quo.

NOTES

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CHAPTER 3

Model Campaigns of Futility: The Portuguese in Africa, 1961–74

Simon Robbins

INTRODUCTION

As the first European colonial power to arrive in Africa and the last to leave,[1] Portugal campaigned in Africa almost every year between 1575 and 1930,[2] establishing a presence in Guinea, Angola, and Mozambique by the end of the fifteenth century. But Portugal was only gradually able to extend her authority on the coast into the interior in a series of colonial campaigns during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The last significant uprising, in Guinea, was suppressed as late as 1936.[3] From 1885 when the Berlin Conference made plain that the British and Germans were looking enviously at the undeveloped and lightly occupied Portuguese enclaves there was a revival of interest in Africa by Portugal in response to the perceived threat from the "new imperialism" and "the scramble for Africa." The following 30 years saw the gradual subjugation of the hinterland. This conquest was mainly mounted to maintain prestige but also to keep the military busy. It was thus mainly driven by military imperialism rather than commercialism, having a similar dynamic to the French conquest of Algeria, Indochina, and Madagascar.[4] Almost every year until 1924 witnessed military expeditions in all three of the Portuguese colonies, employing black troops and exploiting local rivalries.[5] More than 99 percent of the "Portuguese" armies were African.[6]

As the 1960s brought the challenge of a growing nationalism and a demand for decolonization from Portugal's colonies, Dr. Antonio Salazar and his successor, Marcelo Caetano, both shared the same disastrous

flaw—a persistent commitment to maintaining Portugal's empire in Africa, resisting pressures for independence because they regarded Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique not as colonies, but as "overseas territories," part of Portugal itself. Caetano declared during the 1930s that "Africa is for us a moral justification and a *raison d'être* as a power. Without it, we would be a small nation; with it, we are a great country."[7] Again, in a speech in April 1970, he stated that "Africa is more than an area which must be exploited. Without Africa we would be a small nation; with Africa we are a big power."[8] This meant that, although military achievements were able to buy time, which made more permanent and far-reaching changes on the political front possible, if there had been a political will to implement them, these were not forthcoming because the Salazar regime was not prepared either to concede political power or to plan for a smooth devolution. Such concessions, too little and too late, would only be contemplated by Caetano in the early 1970s.[9]

Many within the officer corps had misgivings about this stubborn commitment to retain Portugal's colonies. But when in April 1961 General Botelho Moniz (the defense minister), Colonel Almeida Fernandes (the army minister), and Colonel Francisco da Costa Gomes (the army undersecretary) questioned plans for defending the colonies drawn up by General Kaúlza de Arriaga (air force secretary)—General Muniz told Salazar that a sustained campaign against decolonization by the army was "a suicide mission"—Salazar's response was ruthless, sacking Moniz and Fernandes and transferring Costa Gomes and other dissident officers to sinecure administrative posts. Salazar then assumed responsibility for conducting colonial defense himself and went on television to announce that the Portuguese would remain in Africa "to defend Western and Christian civilisation."[10]

The Portuguese approach to counterinsurgency was heavily influenced by the French doctrine of counter-revolutionary war. Some Portuguese officers had been observers attached to the French forces in Algeria.[11] In adopting the French counterinsurgency techniques of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, many Portuguese political and military leaders shared the belief held by many French soldiers at the height of the Cold War that all colonial disturbances were orchestrated from Moscow and Peking, although as the 1960s progressed it became clear that the communist world was too deeply divided to provide a unified strategy and that nationalism was a more important factor in colonial revolts. Increasingly, the officer corps rejected the government's ideological claims of defending the West, although the Salazar government continued to perceive Portugal as part of a global anticommunist crusade.[12] As late as 1973 the right-wing Kaúlza de Arriaga was still a believer in "the Communist Grand Strategy" and "Communist world expansion," which aimed "to destroy Western civilisation,"[13] but General António de Spínola probably

spoke for the majority when stating in early 1974 that "we must begin by divesting ourselves of the notion that we are defending the West and the western way of life."[14]

Prior to the outbreak of the African wars in 1961, when surprised by a bloody rebellion in Angola, the Portuguese army was an ossified institution, which had not seen active service since World War I, facing a counterinsurgency campaign on three fronts.[15] Nevertheless, many officers were aware of the need to modernize rapidly and of the recent experiences of the British in Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus and the French in Indochina and Algeria. Believing that the army had to prepare to defeat an insurgency, the Portuguese army general staff began to formulate a counterinsurgency doctrine in anticipation of trouble in the Portuguese colonies in Africa following the emergence of militant nationalism during the 1950s. In 1958–59, Portuguese army officers attended the Intelligence Centre of the British Army at Maresfield Park Camp near Uckfield in Sussex and the French army's *Centre d'Instruction de Pacification et de Contre-Guérilla* at Arzew in Oran Province, Algeria, to learn about subversive warfare. Five lectures given by Colonel Hermes de Araújo Oliveira as the professor of geography and military history at the Academia Militar (Military Academy) following a visit to Algeria in 1959 were published as *Guerra Revolucionária* (Revolutionary War) in Lisbon in 1960 under the patronage of the Ministry of the Army. This provided a valuable explanation of subversive war from the Portuguese perspective. This interest in counterinsurgency culminated in 1963 in the publication of the doctrinal manual, *O Exército na Guerra Subversiva* ("The Army in Subversive War"), written by Lieutenant-Colonel Artur Henrique Nunes da Silva and his staff in the operations branch of the army general staff. This doctrine was heavily influenced by contemporary British and French experience and in particular by the French doctrine of *guerre révolutionnaire*.[16]

Within the restrictive framework of Salazar's strategy of retaining Portugal's colonies at all costs, "The Army in Subversive War" provided the tactical doctrine for fighting guerrillas, emphasizing that the key to success was winning the confidence and loyalty of the population and following the British principle of minimum force, which contrasted with the French practice of *ratissage* (raking over), which terrorized the population, or the American practice of conducting counterinsurgency as an adjunct to conventional war. The traditional five phases of an insurgency evolved by Mao Tse-tung in China and developed by General Vo Nguyen Giap in Vietnam were simplified by the Portuguese into two broader phases: a single clandestine preinsurrection phase and an insurrection phase. The Portuguese sought to win militarily but in a low-key, cost-effective, and inexpensive manner, relying increasingly as the wars progressed on the Africanization of the colonial forces and the employment of elite

airborne troops in helicopter assaults to hunt down and defeat the rebels. At a tactical level, the emphasis was on fighting with professional skill in an innovative and irregular fashion, employing light infantry and small units to defeat the insurgent. The army also sought to address the root causes of the insurgency by employing resettlement of the population to separate them from the insurgents and providing social, economic, legal, and administrative services to win the population's loyalty and support, including the manpower to build schools and wells as well as to teach and supply medical, health, and sanitation facilities. The war against communism was fought on all fronts—political, social, and economic as well as military.[17] As Lieutenant-Colonel Hermes de Araújo Oliveira of the army general staff noted: "National mobilisation must not rely exclusively on the armed forces, but absolutely on a country's every resource."[18]

Also adopted from the French was the idea that psychological operations (PSYOPS) could be an important tool in motivating Portuguese soldiers and in winning over the African population to the Portuguese cause, countering the subversion of the insurgents. "The Army in Subversive War" was both comprehensive and impressive in providing an appropriate and timely doctrine for the Portuguese army's counterinsurgency operations in Africa based on the lessons learnt by the British and French in the past decade. Unlike the French and British in the 1950s, the Portuguese in the 1960s had an established doctrine to guide them, although some difficulties were experienced in implementing that doctrine.[19]

ANGOLA

The "national revolution" was begun on February 4, 1961, by the MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*, Popular Movement of the Liberation of Angola) when they launched a series of attacks in the capital, Luanda. Despite tactical failure, this was a psychological success drawing international attention to Angola and an overreaction from the army, local militia, and police, which including summary executions resulting in the deaths of some 3,000 blacks.

On March 15, 1961, the UPA (*União das Populações de Angola*, Union of the Peoples of Angola) started a rural uprising in northern Angola, which lasted into May, resulting in the massacre of whites, mestizos (mixed races), and blacks. The arrival of some 20,000 reinforcements in July and August allowed the Portuguese to reoccupy northern Angola during the dry winter season, between May 13 and October 7, when General Venáncio Deslandes (the new governor-general) announced that military operations had ceased and that the policing phase had begun. A large number of rebels were killed, but once again Portuguese credibility was

damaged by severe white settler reprisals and indiscriminate bombing by the Portuguese air force. Although the Portuguese regained control during this first bruising round, winning on points, the region had become a wasteland, and the revolutionary war had only just commenced, with the rebels employing guerrilla tactics from sanctuaries in the newly independent Congo.[20]

Having reestablished control in northern Angola during the second half of 1961, the Portuguese security forces concentrated on securing the economically important areas of northern Angola to protect the capital, Luanda, and to gain a breathing space in which to make socioeconomic development possible. As part of this strategy, the local population was resettled in strategic hamlets to isolate the guerrillas from their popular support. From the end of 1961 Portuguese strategy was to intercept and destroy any insurgent infiltration across the Congo border, while using internal security to cut the population off from the guerrillas and employing "pyschosocial action" to regain and retain the loyalty of the indigenous population. As massive reinforcements continued to arrive, the military strength in Angola gradually increased from 40,000 in 1962 to 60,000 in 1967. This latter figure represented 15 to 16 times the number of European troops available in early 1961 and a massive commitment because by 1967 some 75 percent of Portugal's entire metropolitan army was serving overseas. These troops were supported by 10,000 uniformed policemen, a corps of some 8,000 volunteers, and a black militia.[21]

In 1962 the Portuguese security forces, mainly army troops, were under the command of the Angolan Military Region (RMA), which had its headquarters in Luanda and was divided into four operational zones (northern, central, southern, and eastern), which in turn controlled sectors that usually corresponded with the administrative districts. This territorial organization was to survive, with minor changes, until 1974. By 1965 the Portuguese seemed to have good reasons for being optimistic, having been successful in reestablishing the situation in northern Angola, helped by serious rifts between the different insurgent movements, the poor leadership and training of the guerrillas, and their lack of popular support.[22]

But by the end of 1966 there was stalemate in all three Portuguese counterinsurgency campaigns, not just in Angola but also in Guinea and Mozambique, forcing the deployment of 120,000 men, the largest military force in Portugal's history, which consumed 40 percent of the national budget. Although Guinea was causing concern, the situation in Angola was viewed with optimism as the guerrillas were mostly confined to the Dembos region. However, from 1967 onward, the MPLA opened up a new front in eastern Angola, which posed a serious threat to the densely populated central heartland, and in mid-1970 the Portuguese estimated that insurgents were operating in 40 percent of Angola, an increase of

35 percent since January 1966. Over the next three years (1971–74), however, the efficiency of the security forces and divisions within their leadership turned the tide against the insurgents. A number of improvements were introduced. These included better leadership; enhanced command and control; greater cooperation between civilian and military leaders at all levels; a comprehensive intelligence-gathering system, which was key to successful operations; the increased availability of helicopters; Africanization of the security forces; the resettlement of the population on a large scale in eastern Angola; political liberalization; and ongoing socioeconomic reforms.[23]

As regards internal security, the security forces were able to confine the areas of guerrilla activity and influence and to gradually regain some control over the local population. In achieving this, a resettlement program employing counterinsurgency lessons learnt in Malaya, the Philippines, and Vietnam played a decisive role in controlling the population, commencing in northern Angola, to the north of the Dembos area, between 1961 and 1964. *Reordenamento rural* was employed for orderly rural resettlement under the control of civil authorities outside battle zones while specially built strategic hamlets (*aldeamentos*) provided military control and protection in areas where insurgents were active so as to separate the local population from the guerrillas. The widely dispersed populace was concentrated and, if deemed reliable, armed for self-protection against the guerrillas. The *aldeamento* system offered the population substantial benefits, notably an improved standard of living, jobs, and security, while giving the security forces control over the local population (and denying its support to the insurgents) and the ability to undertake unrestrained operations against the rebels. However, successful resettlement was dependent on good planning, the availability of finance, and the quality of the personnel and the facilities.[24]

Without these factors, the movement from poor but traditional settlements caused misery and resentment, providing recruits for the insurgents. In the early stages of the campaign, implementation occurred in a somewhat hasty and haphazard manner and often involved coercive measures by the security forces. Later, the sheer size of the resettlement—approximately 1 million people were relocated—meant that the prerequisites for success were not always achieved, especially when it was extended from the northern region to other parts of the country, where circumstances were less conducive. Thus, *aldeamentos* became one of the most controversial aspects of the counterinsurgency campaign in Angola. Nevertheless, after a poor beginning, considerable efforts were made to improve living conditions for the population, although the military policy of resettlement to separate the population from the insurgents was often irreconcilable with the key requirement of winning the inhabitants over to the Portuguese cause. General Joaquim da Luz Cunha, the last

commander in chief in Angola (1972–74), estimated that by 1972 a mere 5 percent of the population was under insurgent control, 20 percent was contaminated, and 75 percent was free of subversion.[25]

The operational strategy throughout the 13-year war in Angola was based on the techniques employed by the French in Algeria. A defensive network of mainly conscript units garrisoned well-defined areas while mobile reaction forces made up of elite troops were deployed to undertake offensive search-and-destroy operations against any insurgents who infiltrated these zones. The so-called static units sought to foster the support of the local population, gather intelligence, provide security for the local political-administrative effort, and achieve dominance over their specific sector using mobility and offensive operations. One commander complained in 1963 that the only objective of many garrisons, which were widely dispersed because of insufficient manpower, was to safeguard their continued existence. Other weaknesses also identified included inadequate training, a lack of aggression, poor motivation of some troops, and a shortage of regular cadres to lead them.[26]

The Portuguese also used "psychosocial action" to maintain the motivation and morale of the security forces and to secure the loyalty and cooperation of the indigenous population, countering the propaganda of the insurgents who promised independence, social advances, and a bright future. The Portuguese promised equality, multiracialism, security, and an improved standard of living. The army provided civic action in support of the civil administration to reinforce the psychological action, notably education, food, medical, religious, and welfare programs. The garrison troops maintained contact with the local community, establishing schools and sports facilities, but these activities again were hampered by a shortage of qualified personnel and adequate funding. In contrast to American policy of free access in Vietnam, Portugal also imposed strict censorship and control over the media in Angola, allowing only small numbers of friendly journalists to enter the war zone. The security police, PIDE, later DGS (*Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado*, International Police for Defense of the State, from 1969 DGS, *Direcção Geral de Segurança*, General Security Directorate), dealt ruthlessly with any resistance in urban centers, which remained comparatively tranquil and unaffected by urban terrorism.[27] This meant also that the army could present itself at home and internationally as untainted by the brutal torture of insurgents, which by alienating public opinion had contributed to the defeat of the French army in Algeria, as the dirty work of interrogation and torture was undertaken by the PIDE.[28]

In particular, following the British model, a new command and control system of councils attended by key civilian and military personnel was set up at provincial, district, municipal, and rural ward level in 1968 to ensure effective cooperation between the security forces and civil administration and coordination of intelligence, logistics, psychological

action, and resources.[29] The appointment of General Francisco da Costa Gomes, as commander in chief in Angola in May 1970, altered the circumstances in Angola at a critical time. A close friend and associate of Spínola, who regularly visited his troops, Costa Gomes was not only very intelligent but also politically astute. Two years later when Costa Gomes departed to become chief of the general staff, the crisis had been resolved, allowing some optimism.[30]

In contrast to the PAIGC (*Partido Africano Para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*, African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde Islands) and FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertacão de Moçambique*, Front for the Liberation of Mozambique), the MPLA had lost momentum by 1972, suffering a crisis in leadership and a severe loss in morale, which, with a loss of Soviet support in December 1973, relegated it to sporadic operations and a fight for survival. This allowed the Portuguese to consider transferring forces from Angola to Mozambique, where the security situation was deteriorating rapidly.[31] Costa Gomes and General José Manuel de Bethencourt Rodrigues, a former military attaché in London and minister of the army, and one of Portugal's "most brilliant young tacticians,"[32] who had been brought to Angola at Costa Gomes's request, were the architects of a successful counterinsurgency strategy, aided by increased force levels, better equipment, and more helicopters. Portuguese operations were carried out with greater aggression and panache, employing small groups of black troops to intercept and ambush insurgent infiltration in areas such as the Dembos Forest, which had hitherto been rebel sanctuaries. Annual dry season offensives, notably Operation *Siroco* from July to October 1970, were deployed against the MPLA infrastructure and their infiltration routes.[33]

By early 1974 the guerrilla threat had been contained by the successful Portuguese strategy and the war in Angola had swung in Portugal's favor. The army's counterinsurgency doctrine, employing lessons from the British and French experience, was broad and effective, although there remained a gap between theory and practice and some administrative and military deficiencies. Yet, the failure to develop a political strategy to meet the aspirations of Africans for independence remained a fatal flaw negating, as in Algeria and Rhodesia, any military success. General Spínola argued correctly that Portugal's colonial wars could not be won by military means alone and that a political settlement was needed to ensure that the war was concluded successfully.[34] The military coup in Portugal in 1974 led to a rapid withdrawal from Angola.[35]

MOZAMBIQUE

Full-scale revolutionary war did not erupt in Mozambique until September 1964.[36] Initially, the insurgents of FRELIMO were contained by the army in the north away from the main population zones.[37]

Operating in small groups from Tanzania and using traditional guerrilla hit-and-run tactics, the insurgents of FRELIMO were initially contained by the army in the north in Cabo Delgado and Niassa away from the main population zones and made little headway. But from 1968, following the resolution of its internal divisions and a change of leadership (after the murder of Eduardo Mondlane), FRELIMO was able to infiltrate from bases in Zaire via Zambia, the strategic but neglected province of Tete, which provided a "backdoor" for infiltration of Rhodesia, surprising the Portuguese. Short of equipment, the Portuguese commanded by Brigadier-General António dos Santos were on the defensive, relying on resettlement and military fortifications in the north and only occasionally launched operations against FRELIMO bases and sanctuaries. A change in strategy was made possible only by significant increases in the numbers of Portuguese troops, which expanded from 25,000 in 1964 to 40,000 by the end of 1965 and to some 60,000 by the beginning of 1970.[38]

Thus, the arrival of General Kaúlza de Arriaga as commander in chief in March 1970 produced a more dynamic counterinsurgency strategy on the pattern already set in Angola and Guinea. This emphasized the offensive, notably search-and-destroy operations to hunt down the guerrillas and destroy their bases, supported by psychological and social reforms to win over the local population.[39] A right-wing supporter of Salazar who made his name as a commander in Mozambique and a friend and admirer of General William Westmoreland (commander in chief of U.S. forces in Vietnam) who acquired the nickname of the "Pink Panther," Kaúlza de Arriaga believed that the war in the forests and bush of Africa could be won through determination and leadership. Some of his tactics copied those of Westmoreland in Vietnam, employing highly mobile troops with air support to kill insurgents.[40] A flamboyant and ambitious character, he was conservative in both military affairs and politics,[41] declaring with overoptimism reminiscent of Westmoreland that:

> In Moçambique itself, the present war cannot now be lost. It is only a question of time before it is finally won. And indeed I foresee this happening within a relatively short space of time. By a successful conclusion to the war I mean as follows: that there will be an immediate detection by our Portuguese forces of an infiltration from across the border, and that the neutralisation or destruction of the infiltrated group will be achieved within a matter of days, or even hours.[42]

Although Kaúlza de Arriaga was one of Portugal's most distinguished public figures, having served for seven years as undersecretary of state and then as professor of strategy for Higher Military Studies and as chairman of the Nuclear Energy Board, his tenure as the commander of the Portuguese forces in Mozambique could hardly be regarded as a great success prior to his retirement in 1973. While he prevented FRELIMO

from hindering the construction of the Cahora Bassa dam, he was unable to prevent full-scale penetration by insurgents of Tete province. Moreover, establishing his own "personality cult," he often spoke on the radio and in the press about "the 100 days war," which inevitably led to another 100 days until the stage was reached in 1973 when very little of what he announced was taken seriously. This affected the army whose morale and performance slumped, and many of the younger conscripts serving in Mozambique became openly skeptical of the High Command during the final 18 months of his tenure. Certainly the level of preparedness and initiative was inferior to that in Guinea where conditions were far more severe than in Mozambique, and Kaúlza de Arriaga's generalship certainly did not compare to the brilliant tactical leadership of Spínola in Guinea, who was critical of his inept performance. Consequently, there was relief when Kaúlza de Arriaga was replaced in August 1973.[43] Kaúlza de Arriaga had well-known political ambitions, and his preoccupation with politics drew criticism from some soldiers.[44]

Kaúlza de Arriaga launched an ambitious dry season offensive, Operation *Gordian Knot*, in the north to destroy the FRELIMO infrastructure along the Mozambique–Tanzania border in 1970. This was the largest operation launched in Africa by the Portuguese, employing some 10,000 troops with air and artillery support. Lasting seven months and using modified hammer-and-anvil tactics, the operation failed at great expense to destroy the FRELIMO guerrillas, who escaped or hid among the population,[45] or the insurgent capacity for infiltration. Further operations were required in the north, Operations *Garrotte* and *Apio*, during 1971.

Large-scale offensives were also mounted in eastern Angola in 1966, 1968, and 1972 during the dry season, which occurred between May and September. The Portuguese asserted that Operation *Attila* in 1972 removed half of the guerrillas operating in eastern Angola. Increasingly, however, there was an emphasis on the employment of continuous small-unit operations, which were more successful in disrupting insurgent activities than the large-scale operations, which merely disrupted them for a limited period and left the guerrilla infrastructure intact.[46]

An equally ambitious project was to build a defensive network of *aldeamentos* along the northern border, creating a cordon sanitaire, which was then extended to other areas of Mozambique. By 1974 almost a million inhabitants had been resettled, but as in Angola the resettlement was handicapped by poor planning and shortages of funds and resources, which provided recruits for the guerrillas.[47] Although Kaúlza de Arriaga in one of his many speeches to his soldiers emphasized the importance of resettlement for "convincing the minds and conquering the hearts" of the inhabitants, too often in reality the population was forcibly resettled in response to insurgent infiltration with inadequate preparation. Economic and social development was left to be implemented later, leaving the

relocated villagers feeling neglected and disgruntled. Resettlement was far more ambitious and on a much greater scale than attempted by the British in either Malaya or Kenya, and Portugal simply lacked the resources to implement it to the required standard. Nevertheless, resettlement enjoyed some success and was more successful than Diem's ill-fated strategic hamlets in South Vietnam.[48]

General Tomas Basto Machado, Kaúlza de Arriaga's successor, was a quieter, able, and imaginative personality, assuming command in the most trying period of the war when the army's prestige had been seriously eroded by an increase in the level of rebel infiltration and by allegations of a massacre of some 400 people at the village of Wiriyamu in December 1972. The Portuguese, including Kaúlza de Arriaga, were accused of conducting a counterinsurgency campaign that employed reprisals and torture against suspected rebels or their supporters, forced labor on military projects in war zones, and a scorched-earth policy to deny food and shelter to the insurgents. These lapses undermined the Portuguese strategy of winning "hearts and minds."[49]

FRELIMO relied on a strategy of attrition, employing infiltration of the countryside, hit-and-run raids on the security forces, and landmines to wear down the Portuguese forces that could not be defeated on the battlefield,[50] but were unable to hold back FRELIMO's growing strength. The erosion of the situation was such that the army was accused by white settlers, who increasingly clashed with the security forces, of ineffectiveness and an inability to provide them with security against guerrilla attack.[51] By 1974 the tempo of the insurgency in Mozambique, especially in the Tete region, which bordered on Rhodesia, had risen to the extent that the insurgents operated in some areas unchallenged by the Portuguese security forces,[52] who had lost the strategic initiative.[53] FRELIMO's campaign of terror against the population included 689 assassinations (including the murder of 55 chiefs in Tete Province alone during 1971), over 2,000 woundings, and 6,500 abductions between 1964 and February 1973.[54] Nevertheless, the growing problems in Mozambique were not serious enough to suggest that military defeat was imminent in 1974.[55]

GUINEA-BISSAU

In Guinea, the PAIGC led by Amilcar Cabral began its campaign against the civilian population in the northwest in villages near the Senegal border in July 1961 and a full-scale revolutionary war in March 1962, launching guerrilla attacks and ambushes on Portuguese troops. PAIGC controlled the southern littoral and in 1964 began to move into the north. Between 1965 and 1968 the insurgency extended from the northeast and southwest to the center, and, in 1966, to the eastern Fula heartlands. By 1967, the Portuguese had abandoned the rural areas and

were concentrated in the towns where the colonial administration was based. Although the Portuguese held the towns and villages, the PAIGC controlled the countryside, concentrating their efforts on destroying army garrisons and strategic hamlets, which blocked their supply lines and isolated the population from insurgent control.[56] By 1968 it was estimated that PAIGC controlled 50 percent of the territory and contested a further 25 percent while the Portuguese controlled only 25 percent.[57]

The Portuguese had relinquished the initiative to the PAIGC by retreating into outposts, akin to American firebases in Vietnam, after an unsuccessful offensive (*Operação Tridente*, Operation *Trident*) to drive the insurgents from the Como Island region, which was adjacent to the rebel sanctuary of Guinea-Conakry, formerly French Guinea, in February 1964.[58] After only a few years, the army had its back to the wall and defeat was beginning to look certain. Large-scale sweeps through the swampy terrain, which was intersected by many rivers, by the Portuguese of the type employed by Westmoreland in Vietnam had little effect against the guerrillas who could retreat to sanctuaries in Guinea-Conakry and Senegal. Such operations became symbolic of the failure of conventional methods that failed to provide long-term results in suppressing the insurgency.[59]

In 1968, after a fact-finding tour in Guinea, Brigadier Spínola reported to the Supreme Defense Council in Lisbon that the campaign in Guinea was lost, criticizing the strategy of the Governor-General Arnaldo Schultz and the army leadership, which had glossed over the magnitude of the reverses that had been sustained. Although a veteran of Angola, the rotund Schultz, a former interior minister and a Salazar loyalist, proved to be lackluster and inept, neglecting the need to win the "hearts and minds" of the population with civic action. Rather than pursuing an all-out conventional war, Spínola's alternative strategy was a more political approach to win "hearts and minds," which would gain time to allow a political settlement to be reached with the insurgents, although he did not advocate full independence. Spínola was sent back to Guinea with carte blanche to implement his radical ideas, taking command of the Portuguese troops in Guinea in May 1968.[60]

Spínola arrived at a time when Portuguese fortunes were at their lowest ebb, replacing General Schultz, who left with Portuguese authority diminishing fast, having predicted when he arrived in 1965 that the war in Guinea would be over within six months. Spínola insisted that he have control of both the civilian and military administration as both governor and commander in chief. Following the example of Templer in Malaya, he established unity of command, which allowed him to minimize the bureaucratic red tape and interdepartmental rivalry, which hitherto had dogged operations in Guinea.[61]

General António de Spínola, an austere but stylish cavalry officer with panache, who had won international prizes for his horsemanship

and with his trademark monocle, brown gloves, and riding whip, a "considerable reputation for eccentricity" and a love of publicity rather like Field Marshal Montgomery, the celebrated British World War II commander, cultivated "an image." Born on April 11, 1910, to prosperous parents, Spínola's career was not hindered by his father's influence as a trusted adviser to Salazar and his own association with the elite corps, the *Guarda Nacional Republicana* (GNR, National Republican Guard), concerned with the internal security of the regime. Spínola also served during the Spanish Civil War (attached to Franco's army) and on the Eastern Front with the German army during World War II. Following the outbreak of the African wars, Spínola served with distinction as commander of cavalry in Angola for three years (1961–64), establishing his reputation in antiguerrilla operations not only as a professional soldier who demanded high standards but also for his toughness, riding on horseback in the jungle and insisting on visiting the front line. In Guinea, Spínola emerged as charismatic, antiestablishment, intolerant of incompetence, reforming, and openly critical of the regime.[62] Aware that the campaign in Guinea was futile, Spínola provided Salazar with a metaphor for fighting guerrillas, which became celebrated:

> The flea has carried out his mission which was by feeding off you to keep you from sleeping. But you cannot carry out yours, which was to find the flea. Imagine this happening for a whole week; you would die of exhaustion.[63]

Regardless of his later failings as a politician while serving as president of the Portuguese Republic, Spínola provided inspiring and dynamic leadership during his tenure as commander in Guinea. In four years Spínola was able both to restore the low morale of the troops and to implement an extensive "hearts and minds" strategy employing civic action and the integration of Africans into the government and administration. Traveling around the country by helicopter and jeep, Spínola got to know the local conditions and population, and his troops, who were unaccustomed to seeing their generals, inspiring great loyalty particularly among the officers who were impressed by his ability. He was also a disciplinarian, prepared to make enemies by weeding out officers who were incompetent, unfit, or never seen by their men at the front and to send others into the bush where they were most needed. He built up a battalion of commandos, which was commanded by two white officers but otherwise was led by black officers and NCOs. He also had plans for an eventual Africanization of senior positions and also recruited a militia to provide local security.[64]

In this manner Spínola reinvigorated the conduct of the campaign, based on "four main essentials," namely the development of a well coordinated intelligence organization, a "hearts and minds" campaign under the slogan *por uma Guiné Melhor* (for a Better Guinea) to win the support

of the population (by providing homes, roads, schools, teachers, and medical services), an integrated command system, and the realization that counterinsurgency tended to be of long duration.[65] He put a new emphasis on employing small, aggressive units based on the *bi-grupo* (bi-groups) employed by the PAIGC guerrillas, which hunted down the rebels and won back the initiative for the Portuguese, and an elaborate training program, *Instrução de Aperfeiçoamento Operacional* (IAO, Operational Proficiency Instruction) to acclimatize troops and units when arriving in theater. This was similar to the method used by the British in Malaya.[66] Spínola also laid much emphasis on the air support provided by helicopters in counterinsurgency operations and deployed troops to seal the border.[67] From 1968 the Portuguese had recovered most of the contested regions and controlled all the centers of population.[68]

In 1970 Spínola launched his campaign to "build a better Guinea," aiming to eradicate the injustices that drove the black population into the arms of the PAIGC and to win their "hearts and minds." Ninety million *escudos* were spent on civic action, notably the construction of 15,000 houses, 164 schools, 163 fire stations, 86 fountains, and 40 infirmaries. Ninety-five percent of doctors and twenty percent of teachers in Guinea were provided by the army, which also made improvements in agriculture and transportation, notably air fields and roads. In addition to economic development, Spínola also attempted to make the government more representative by employing blacks in the administration and making sure that they received justice in the courts. To ensure grievances were heard and dealt with, officers met representatives of tribal and religious groups and a system of ethnically based "People's Congresses" was set up "to form strong instruments of psychological mobilisation around government policy" and to provide "dialogue between the government and the people," culminating with a "General Congress" in Bissau. Spínola also presided over a legislative council of 14 elected members.[69]

Spínola's socioeconomic reforms stole much of PAIGC's thunder.[70] The adoption of "psychological warfare" by the Portuguese as a response to the techniques of political doctrine employed by the PAIGC guerrillas was drawn from the experiences of other armies, notably the French in Indochina and Algeria. By 1968 the employment of psychological action to show the merits of a liberal, Western society in stark contrast to the rigid and authoritarian liberation movements, which were inspired by and led by communists, was a well-established component of counterinsurgency strategy. However, authoritarian Portugal faced real difficulties in establishing itself as an alternative to an indigenous liberation movement, given the destruction inflicted by its operations on the local population.[71]

Spínola's conviction was that the war could not be ended by a military solution but that there had to be a negotiated settlement. One of his staff officers noted that:

The letters which he wrote to Lisbon both officially and privately, stressed that there could be no military solution to the conflict. We discussed it openly among ourselves. We all agreed with General Spínola. This attitude spread through all the troops. We felt that a political solution was necessary, but that we must fight in the meantime.[72]

In 1971, having regained enough initiative on the ground to be able to negotiate from strength, the Portuguese were given the opportunity to reach a political settlement when President Senghor of Senegal acted as mediator in exploratory talks. But although in mid-1972, Spínola was allowed to meet Senghor in Southern Senegal, Caetano refused to countenance a cease-fire followed by direct meetings between Spínola and Cabral, leading to a joint Portuguese–PAIGC government in Guinea. Indeed, Spínola was "profoundly shocked" to find that Caetano preferred "an honourable military defeat" rather than "negotiate with the terrorists" and open the door to similar negotiations in the other "overseas provinces."[73] Morale was at an all-time high prior to the breakdown of talks and the departure of Spínola in early 1973, but subsequently the Portuguese situation in Guinea began to worsen expeditiously.

Spínola's dynamic leadership had served only to paper over serious cracks in the Portuguese war effort, and Guinea became a tinderbox after his departure as attitudes hardened on both sides, especially with the death of Cabral, killed by a bomb in January 1973. In contrast to the Portuguese forces, which suffered from shortages of equipment, PAIGC began to receive a steady stream of arms following the end of the Vietnam War, notably including modern ground-to-air missiles, such as the SAM-7, which restricted the operations of the Portuguese air force. This deprived the army of its air support and caused a devastating slump in morale following the loss of aircraft and two important Portuguese garrisons, which were wiped out by a PAIGC bombardment. The introduction of sophisticated weapons, including some sorties by MIGs from Conakry against Portuguese positions, tipped the balance, both militarily and psychological, toward the insurgents.[74] As one officer, a *miliciano* (a temporary, nonregular officer), noted, "we knew then that we were headed for defeat."[75]

Furthermore, the insurgents were able to rest, train, and strike from their bases in the sanctuaries of Guinea-Conakry and Senegal, employing hit-and-run tactics to strike and then withdraw, avoiding serious contact with security forces.[76] The counterinsurgency campaign in Guinea was continued under General Bethencourt Rodrigues, but the situation deteriorated during 1973, and it was clear that neither side could achieve out-and-out victory. The PAIGC now controlled large areas. Guinea was Portugal's Achilles' heel, providing the principal reason for the army's decision to overthrow the government in the coup of April 1974.[77]

CONCLUSION

By prolonging the war, which was increasingly senseless and slipping away from the Portuguese, Caetano encouraged division and discontent in the army, setting in train a coup d'état.[78] The officer corps was united against the regime by its growing inability to meet the demands of the African wars as a result of the breakdown of the army, which began to show signs of cracking under the pressure. This included low morale, the fatigue of the small regular cadre, a dependence on black troops, the poor training of conscript soldiers, and growing tensions between regular and conscript officers. By 1974, the situation, which had been well in hand largely owing to the poor training and equipment of the guerrillas who opposed them, was becoming increasingly desperate.[79] Owing to training, the insurgents had much improved in training, adaptability, and initiative, although still not equal to those of the Portuguese forces.[80]

As the insurgents improved so the professional standards of the Portuguese army declined. As the war progressed, the quality of the conscripts steadily declined. Many likely good fighting men were able to obtain deferments or evaded service by emigrating. The shortage of regular officers and NCOs threw the burden of training the conscripts on to inexperienced *miliciano* officers and conscript NCOs who themselves were just out of training. This resulted in soldiers who were often badly trained and led. Moreover, a "cost efficiency" system of training and manpower allocation borrowed from the U.S. Army undermined unit morale as the conscripts were trained in large camps rather than by the men who would lead them in battle and were knowledgeable in the local conditions. Officers at the front found that regimental cohesion was seriously undermined by the continual redeployment of soldiers, NCOs, and officers. The Portuguese, like the Americans in Vietnam, paid a stiff price for this more "efficient" system of manpower allocation. All troops in Africa fought as infantry even though artillery, engineer, and cavalry units were not trained for such tasks. In marked contrast to the tightly knit regimental structure of the kind employed by the British Army in Malaya, Kenya, and elsewhere, Portuguese commanders were forced to patch together units in the battle zone. The result was poor tactical efficiency, high casualties, and low morale.[81]

This situation was exacerbated by Portuguese techniques that were copied from French counterinsurgency methods in which stationary garrisons commanded by *milicianos* undertook civic action, patrols, and gathered intelligence while elite units of commandos, paratroopers, or marines moved around the countryside doing most of the fighting against the insurgents. These elite troops, often black, commanded by regular officers or keen *miliciano* volunteers formed a sharp contrast to the frequently timid stationary garrisons led by *milicianos*, who were fed up with the war and felt that they "were being used to do the dirty work."

These units often did not fight well, evading battle and staying in their bunkers rather than patrolling.[82] The antiwar atmosphere in Portugal was demonstrated by the desertion rate in which some 110,000 conscripts did not report for military service between 1961 and 1974.[83]

The coup of April 25, 1974, signaled the final fall of prewar European fascism in its Iberian redoubt, the end of the Portuguese Empire—one of the longest lasting empires—and the independence of its African colonies, leaving Rhodesia and South Africa, the last bastions of "white supremacy."[84] The long, costly war had made the army increasingly skeptical that the struggle could be won.[85] Like the French in Algeria, relations between the white community in the African colonies and the Portuguese army were not good. White settlers grew angry at the failure of the army to protect them against the guerrillas[86] and often questioned the bravery and martial spirit of the army, resenting the increasing reliance of the army on black troops. One white Mozambican reported that:

> The Army sold us out. They fought well at first, but then it was rubbish. From about 1970, officers began to say that this was not their country, it was not their war. I would estimate that 75 per cent of the officers felt this way.[87]

The Portuguese army adjusted well to the doctrinal requirements of counterinsurgency, and particularly successful was the policy of Africanization—employing indigenous troops. By late 1973 over 50 percent of the security forces were black and as high as 90 percent in some elite units such as the *Grupos Espeçiais* (GE), the airborne *Grupos Espeçiais de Paraquedista* (GEP), or the *Commandos Africanos* formed by Spínola in Guinea, while the DGS also recruited the *Flechas*, some of whom were recruited from former insurgents. There were also large African militia and self-defense forces, guarding *aldeamentos* and villages, respectively, who were given their own weapons.[88]

As with the French in Algeria, a split emerged between the elite units, such as the paratroopers and commandos, who did most of the fighting and the conscripts who formed the majority of the army (50 percent in Guinea, 70 percent in Angola) and were employed on garrison duties. The conscripts lacked discipline and motivation, demonstrating a reluctance to participate in the war with any enthusiasm. In Guinea Portuguese soldiers were reported taking siestas in the middle of the day while they were accused by the Rhodesians of operating noisily in Mozambique to ensure little contact with the insurgents.[89] Tactically, the Rhodesians and South Africans thought that the Portuguese in Mozambique were clumsy and inept, employing patrols that were too large, consisting of 30 to 40 men rather than four-man "sticks." Indeed, most of the problems were the result of a lack of regular, professional troops and the fact that the conscripts neither understood Africa nor

wanted to be there. They fought from bases like the Americans in Vietnam and remained in the towns, being reluctant either to patrol the bush or control it by night,[90] and failed to implement properly the army's standard counterinsurgency tactics through poor motivation or techniques.[91] This attitude is partly explained by the fact that, having limited resources, the Portuguese sought to limit casualties, losing fewer deaths in a decade from 1961 than the French lost in Algeria in a single year.[92]

No European imperial power fought so long a colonial struggle as that of Portugal between 1961 and 1974.[93] The length of the war put enormous pressures on the nation and the army in particular. During the African wars, the enormous expenditure on defense amounted to over 7 percent of the GNP and 40 percent of the annual budget, placing Portugal in the same category as Israel.[94] By 1967, some 75 percent of the metropolitan army was serving overseas. By 1970, with 150,000 troops in Africa, Portugal had deployed a proportion of its population, which was five times that of the United States in Vietnam in the same year. The Portuguese had called up a greater proportion of those eligible for military service than any other country except Israel and the two Vietnams.[95] During the colonial wars, two conflicting approaches emerged, which became associated with the contrasting personalities of two of Portugal's most celebrated generals,[96] namely the more conventional Kaúlza de Arriaga in Mozambique and the more unorthodox although equally ambitious Spínola in Guinea.

For the army of one of the least rich and developed countries in Western Europe, to fight three wars simultaneously for such a prolonged period without suffering military defeat was a substantial accomplishment, but the strains of this effort resulted in the coup d'état of April 1974 and the collapse of both the Salazarist state and Portugal's Empire.[97] In May 1974, General Costa Gomes noted that the army had "reached the limits of neuro-psychological exhaustion."[98] With the wars in all three colonies in stalemate on the military plane, as in so many counterinsurgencies, the final outcome was decided at the political level.[99] Thirteen years of costly warfare in three of its African possessions stretched Portuguese resources to the utmost, creating a climate of "psychopolitical collapse," and, although still undefeated on the battlefield, Portugal cracked politically. The coup of 1974 followed by a period of political instability led inevitably to an abrupt withdrawal from Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique, which gained their independence.[100]

NOTES

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5. Malyn Newitt, *Portugal in Africa: The Last Hundred Years* (London: C Hurst, 1981), 49, 51–52.

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8. Sunday Times Insight Team, *Insight on Portugal: Year of the Captains* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1975), 11.

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11. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 109.

12. Norrie MacQueen, "Portugal's First Domino: 'Pluricontinentalism' and Colonial War in Guiné-Bissau, 1963–1974," *Contemporary European History* 8, no. 2 (July 1999): 23; Porch, *Portuguese Armed Forces*, 75–76; van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 109.

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14. Porch, *The Portuguese Armed Forces and the Revolution*, 84.

15. Sunday Times Insight Team, *Insight on Portugal*, 15; van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 56.

16. Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa*, 37, 40–46, 57, Footnote 28; MacQueen, *Decolonization of Portuguese Africa*, 17–22.

17. Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa*, 46–55; and W. S. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 114–16.

18. Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa*, 67.

19. Ibid., 46–55; van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 114–16.

20. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 56–58, 62–63, 71–75, 78–79, 88, 91; Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa*, 26–28.

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22. Opello, "Guerrilla War in Portuguese Africa," 34; van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 110–11; Wheeler, "The Portuguese Army in Angola," 431.

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29. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 187–89.
30. Ibid., xi, 194; Bruce, *Portugal: The Last Empire*, 131.
31. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 155–57, 184–87.
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34. Ibid., 224, 231–32, 234, 261.
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36. Ibid., 84.
37. Porch, *The Portuguese Armed Forces and the Revolution*, 53.
38. Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution*, 30; MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa*, 47; Opello, "Guerrilla War in Portuguese Africa," 29–33; van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 241.
39. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 241; Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution*, 30.
40. Sunday Times Insight Team, *Insight on Portugal*, 25.
41. Bruce, *Portugal: The Last Empire*, 20, 81.
42. Arriaga, *The Portuguese Answer*, 70.
43. Venter, *The Zambesi Salient*, 35, 103–5, 266, 282.
44. Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution*, 69.
45. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola, 1961–1974*, 241; Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution*, 30; Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa*, 80.
46. Beckett, "The Portuguese Army," 144–45.
47. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 242.
48. Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution*, 154–63.
49. Cann, *Counterinsurgency in Africa*, 120; Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution*, 54, 120, 128–33; MacQueen, *The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa*, 48–49; Venter, *The Zambesi Salient*, 103–5.
50. Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution*, 31–33.
51. van der Waals, *Portugal's War in Angola*, 242.
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55. Ibid.
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CHAPTER 4

The Model Counterinsurgency: Dhofar, 1962–75

James Worrall

INTRODUCTION

The Dhofar war is often considered to be a model campaign,[1] although it has received relatively little scholarly attention and has certainly not had the same kind of influence upon the study and practice of counterinsurgency as the campaign in Malaya, which is odd considering that the environment in which the campaigns of the first decade of the twenty-first century were fought mirrors that of Oman rather more than the jungles of southeast Asia. This chapter seeks to explore not only the peaks and troughs of the counterinsurgency campaign in Oman, with particular focus on the fighting in the southern province of Dhofar, but aims to contextualize this process within the history of Oman and Anglo-Omani relations and the process of statebuilding, which was occurring in parallel with the counterinsurgency campaign itself. Having said this, while this context is essential, the chapter seeks to focus more on the military side of the war and those elements that were more directly associated with the conduct of the campaign. The chapter begins by briefly exploring the previous counterinsurgency campaign fought in Oman, the *Jebel Akhdar* war of the 1950s as this not only provides important context but also because many of the decisions taken in the aftermath of this conflict are important for understanding the approach taken in Dhofar in later years. The obsessive focus on preventing a recurrence of the unrest in the north of Oman also meant that little attention was paid to the developing situation in the south of the country.

At this juncture, a brief overview of the literature examining the Dhofar war is of importance, both to frame the structure of this chapter and to offer readers an understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, and approaches of the existing historiography of the war.

Perhaps the dominant aspect of the literature on the campaign is the burgeoning, at least when compared to other literature on Oman in general or the Dhofar war in particular, assortment of memoirs focused around the Dhofar war. The most famous is undoubtedly Sir Rannulph Fiennes's *Where Soldiers Fear to Tread*,[2] but other works include John Akehurst's *We Won a War: The Campaign in Oman 1965–75*,[3] David Arkless's *The Secret War: Dhofar 1971–72*,[4] Peter Thwaites's *Muscat Command*,[5] Ian Gardiner's more recent *In the Service of the Sultan*,[6] Andrew Higgins's entertaining and insightful *With the SAS and Other Animals: A Vet's Experiences during the Dhofar War 1974*,[7] and Bryan Ray's *Dangerous Frontiers: Campaigning in Somaliland and Oman*.[8] In addition, the autobiographies of John Akehurst's *Generally Speaking*[9] and Ken Perkins's *A Fortunate Soldier*[10] also provide useful material. There is also a subcategory within the ever-flourishing field of "SAS studies" comprising memoirs that deal explicitly with the Dhofar war such as Tony Jeapes's *SAS Operation Oman*[11] and Peter de la Billière's *Looking for Trouble*,[12] in addition to a seemingly endless array of chapters both in other memoirs, for example, Paul Sibley's *A Monk in the SAS*,[13] and those in more general books on the SAS such as Anthony Kemp's *The SAS Savage Wars of Peace*[14] and Peter Ratcliffe's *Eye of the Storm*.[15] While all of these books are useful, the latter tend to have only small sections on Dhofar and the former, since they are memoirs, need to be treated with the usual element of caution. In addition to this is the fact that they are often focused on specific limited tours, lack context and detailed knowledge of wider events and processes, and are often written in a style designed to attract mass-market readership. Despite these shortcomings, the focus of these books is, of course, very much upon military operations and they provide a fascinating and often vivid picture of the nature of the conflict and the nature, extent, and utility of (in particular) of the British participation on the ground. In this sense then, these memoirs are a useful jumping-off point for the study of the Dhofar campaign but are at their best when complemented by more academic work that investigates individual elements of the campaign and particular periods in more depth and that which offers an overview of the whole war.

Until recently, there has been no literature detailing the whole of the counterinsurgency campaign in Dhofar,[16] although the campaign still apparently forms part of the curriculum at the staff college at Shrivenham.[17] The publication of J. E. Peterson's hefty volume, *Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy*,[18] in 2007 has gone a very long way toward filling that gap. This book examines both the Imamate

Rebellion of the 1950s and the Dhofar war of the 1960s and 1970s and gives an almost blow-by-blow account of events. The book is usefully militarily focused but suffers from a lack of referencing should one wish to find out more. Despite this, as the official Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) historian, and a recognized authority on Oman, Peterson would have had access to some interesting primary source material and this makes the book likely to be the most definitive account.[19]

In addition to Peterson's work, which forms the basis of the historical record of events during the Dhofar war, there have also been a number of other publications focused on the campaign itself (as opposed to the wider political, diplomatic, and developmental elements), four of which stand out. First, the classic work of Fred Halliday's *Arabia without Sultans* must be mentioned here as there are several key chapters that deal with the insurgency and the situation in Oman. While dated and taking a Marxist line, Halliday spent time with the rebels, and despite the overt sympathy with the insurgents and their cause, the work does paint a vivid picture and is very useful in giving us an insight into rebel motivations and structures.[20] In more recent years, there have been some good journal articles reassessing the campaign in the light of archival releases and because of the post-2003 focus on the study of counterinsurgency.[21] Perhaps the most provocative of these is Marc DeVore's *A More Complex and Conventional Victory: Revisiting the Dhofar Counterinsurgency, 1963–1975*, which argues against large currents of the literature that "lessons learned in previous counterinsurgencies (Malaya, Kenya, and Borneo) proved of only limited value in Oman's physical and cultural environment." He also posits that "only Iran's direct military intervention and the dramatic growth of Oman's financial resources after the 1973 oil crisis provided the resources to conduct large-scale offensive operations."[22] This suggestion has a certain element of truth to it but goes against the interpretations of others who had to serve alongside the Iranians and were more than a little skeptical of their fighting abilities and what they had to offer the conflict.[23]

One of the most important things to understand about the Dhofar war is that it was British-led, rather than British-fought and it developed over its course to become a joint Anglo-Omani enterprise, which drew in contributions of various kinds from countries as diverse as Iran, Jordan, and India. The complexity of the international side of the campaign, when added to both the importance of its context and its extended duration, makes it extremely difficult to disentangle and present the campaign clearly in any format below full book length without losing vital themes, linkages, and nuance. Indeed, the British themselves back in Whitehall both at the MoD (Ministry of Defense) and FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) had trouble understanding quite where they had come from and where they were going with the campaign and sought, both during the campaign and in the aftermath of the war's end in the late

1970s, to bring together their information to form a clear chronology of the war.[24] This chronology, pieced together as it was after the war and grouped the conflict in distinct phases or periods, forms the basis of this chapter both in terms of its structure and for much of the core content. Because the chapter seeks to offer an overview of the development of the counterinsurgency (but naturally, and by necessity, of the insurgency as well), it makes more sense to do this chronologically rather than thematically. This allows the reader to better understand the sweep and development of the war rather than viewing it through a more compartmentalized structure. This approach, though, naturally inclines toward narrative and description and away from analysis. Thus, to address this issue, the chapter seeks to offer more explicit sections of analysis at the end of its description of the main events in each phase of the campaign and supplements the outline offered by the "official" chronology by drawing upon other sources and in particular upon the only comprehensive outline of the development of the campaign published thus far, that offered in the second half of J. E. Peterson's volume *Oman's Insurgencies*. Clearly, the approach taken here is not entirely satisfactory given the nature and complexity of the subject but is designed to overcome the limitations present to achieve its core goal of providing an overview of the development of the campaign over its fullest duration.

One should also acknowledge at this point that even the duration of the war is at times unclear with various authors assigning the campaign varying lengths. This chapter goes beyond the years in its title somewhat because this is important to a full understanding of the campaign but also chooses specific years both to act as a framing device and to demonstrate with some clarity the sheer length of the campaign. Since His Majesty Sultan Qaboos declared the campaign to be over at the end of 1975, this is often taken as the final year of the war; however, as the Special Air Service (SAS)—such key actors and symbols of the gravity of the situation, as well as of the British commitment to the war—was not removed until toward the end of 1976, this too may serve as a useful point at which to draw a line and declare the war to be over but this too would perhaps be misleading—as may be the withdrawal of the Royal Air Force (RAF) from its bases at Salalah and Masirah in 1977. Yet there was still ongoing fighting in the west of Dhofar in 1978, and sporadic ambushes and contacts were still occurring as late as 1980, although clearly the situation had been utterly transformed by that time. Although it is always difficult to pin down the exact start and end of an insurgency, this chapter has taken the years 1962–1975 for two principle reasons. First, the earlier date allows us insight into the earliest activities of the insurgency and enables us to follow its evolution in its early years when with good policy and intelligence it could have been nipped in the bud; and, second, the chapter chooses to largely end in 1975 because of the significant change in the nature of the campaign toward the middle of that year and because both

British and Sultanate authorities (who were both rather shocked at the sudden deterioration in the strength of the insurgents over the course of 1975) were willing to publicly declare victory.

The intellectual problem with the study of all insurgencies is mired in the difficulty of deciding on when and where to begin and end the study without damaging the findings, but in the spirit of compromise needed to achieve clarity, the chapter begins with a brief examination of the Anglo-Omani relationship, which was so crucial to the conduct and successful outcome of this counterinsurgency campaign, and it follows this up with a précis of the history of the previous counterinsurgency campaign in the north of Oman during the 1950s. Then, taking the "official" chronology of the war as its guide, the chapter unfolds through the examination not of individual years of the campaign but through an examination of the distinct phases of the war identified in the chronology. The chapter then ends with a brief examination of some of the wider processes ongoing in terms of state-building and development before drawing some conclusions.

THE ANGLO-OMANI THREAD

The formal relationship between the two countries can be traced back through the East India Company to 1646, although it is more commonly associated with the 1798 Treaty of Friendship.[25] As Britain rose as an Indian Ocean power, it was naturally forced to interact with the Omanis as an important and powerful state in the region in its own right, as well as competing with the French and the Dutch. An alliance of convenience was duly formed, which grew more one sided as Oman declined in power and became separated into Arabian Oman and East African Oman, centered on Zanzibar.[26] Over the years, relations developed on a twin track of necessity for both sides and a form of friendship and mutual admiration. This Anglo-Omani thread is important for understanding the role that Britain played in Oman in the second half of the twentieth century for while discourses of power, colonialism, and necessity are valid there is still a different element here beyond just *need*: it is the bonds that have grown up between the two nations and their citizens, bonds that played a real role in the successful partnership that was further developed over the course of the Dhofar war that form an unmeasurable, yet tangible, element in understanding why this counterinsurgency effort prevailed in 1975.[27]

THE FORMER EXAMPLE: THE IMAMATE REBELLION OF THE 1950s

The Imamate Rebellion, which lasted from 1954 to 1959, was rooted in tensions over the extent to which the Sultan's writ ran over the interior. Britain had brokered a truce and a treaty in 1920 at Seeb, which appeared

to govern relations but which in reality solved little. With the election of a new Imam in the interior, tensions soon grew and eventually resulted in a fairly extensive insurgency. This was initially contained but grew much worse after 1957, supported as it was by the Saudis and cleverly taking advantage of Arab Nationalist trends to garner support from Egypt and Iraq. The situation eventually necessitated considerable direct British intervention with armored cars, the SAS, the Trucial Oman Scouts from (what was to become in 1971) the neighboring United Arab Emirates (UAE), and a detachment of the Cameronians, along with RAF air support.[28] This counterinsurgency campaign displayed few of the hallmarks of the later campaign in Dhofar and relied considerably more on coercion to enforce compliance with the Sultan Sai'd's regime. Its success in 1959 came through a daring mission in the *Jebel Akhdar* to flush the remaining rebels out of their mountain stronghold. It resulted in the leaders of the rebellion fleeing into exile in Saudi Arabia and necessitated a continuing strong SAF presence to dissuade any repeat occurrences. In this sense then, while undoubtedly successful, the Imamate Rebellion, or the *Jebel Akhdar* war, had the positive outcome of encouraging the British to fund and assist the Sultan in developing his armed forces and beginning to bring civilian development projects into the country, which left it better prepared to deal with the Dhofar rebellion than it otherwise would have been—yet had the rather more negative consequence of encouraging the Sultan to believe that harsh measures worked effectively and in focusing attention on the north of the country at the expense of the south.[29]

THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

Having briefly examined the scene in Oman in terms of both the wider sweep of Anglo-Omani relations and the Imamate Rebellion, it is also crucial to speak of the specific threefold context against which the Dhofar war took place. The three key themes here are, of course, the Cold War competition both globally and regionally, the spread of radical and Arab nationalist ideologies throughout the Middle East, and the competition between regimes controlled by these ideologies—principally Egypt, Iraq, and Syria—and finally Britain's historical role in the region and eventual decision to withdraw from the Gulf States by the end of 1971. The Cold War competition meant that rebellions had a source of external resources and support principally from Cuba, East Germany, China, and the Soviet Union. The importance of the Gulf and Oman, strategically and especially for its oil resources, made the region globally pivotal. In addition, Britain's imperial decline throughout the 1960s and 1970s left the Gulf as its last really significant independent area of interest and major military presence, in large part because of the demands of NATO and the need to secure Europe against the Soviet threat.

It is this wider context that is crucial for understanding why the insurgency took root and why (despite the odds) Britain was able to lead the way in defeating it.[30]

PERIOD I: DECEMBER 1, 1962–MAY 27, 1965

The insurgency began in a very unobtrusive manner and is invariably put down to the crosscurrents of Arab nationalism and socialism as well as the doctrines on national liberation and self-determination, which were sweeping through the Middle East. Dhofar had traditionally been a fairly remote and traditional place and was ethnically and culturally somewhat distinct from the rest of Arabia, let alone Oman despite hundreds of years of Arab and Islamic influence.[31] This is crucial for understanding the specific grievances and aspirations of the Dhofaris. When examining the earliest years of the conflict, when rebel numbers were low and attacks were sporadic and relatively ineffective—despite the fact that external assistance was being received from an early stage—the obvious site of analysis is whether the conflict could have been nipped in the bud at this early stage, thus saving the later much greater investment in time, expense, and loss of life.

While somewhat counterfactual, it is hard to see, given the situation pertaining at that time, how it could have been prevented. Not only was British and Omani attention elsewhere, this was not an insurgency that could have been as easily foreseen as it appears with hindsight. It developed very slowly, almost imperceptibly one might say, and given the constraints (both fiscal and political), it is hard to see how change could have been mobilized sufficiently to have had enough of an effect. If all progress was slow in Oman during this period, then the growth of the insurgency mirrored that sloth. Oman was facing the headwinds of change in the region and was ill-equipped at that stage to deal with them.

It is difficult even today to really pin down the roots of the insurgency in Dhofar, although it is perhaps best associated with the emigration for work from the 1940s onward in the oil-rich Gulf states of Dhofaris who not only were exposed to radical socialist and nationalist ideologies but also saw for the first time how differently others in the region lived and how quickly the world was changing and developing. This naturally made them compare their situation at home with those of their new employers. As part of the process of expatriates sticking together, clubs and associations were formed. Peterson identifies six strands of opposition group that had formed by the early 1960s—the Arab Nationalist Movement, the Dhofar Benevolent Society/Dhofar Charitable Association, the Dhofar Soldier's Organization, the Party of the Advance, the Black Palm, and the Bait Kathir tribe.[32] Others, to use the modern phrase, "self-radicalized" and were later drawn into the insurgency. The linkages

made in these groups with other radicals across the Middle East and particularly in Yemen were to be of greater significance after 1967. It is interesting also to note that many Dhofaris worked in what is today termed the *security sector* within the other Gulf states and thus gained real experience and skills in the military arts; this perhaps made them rather more of a threat than they would otherwise have been.

It appears likely that the rebellion began in a small way with the grievances of the Bait Kathir Sheikh Musallim bin Nufal who had been part of the small unit separate to the SAF stationed in the south—the Dhofar force but who had fallen out with the former slaves who made up the majority of the unit. As a bedu who had perceived his pride slighted, this led to a period of absence without leave, which soon spiraled out of control and eventually led to elements of the tribe attempting to take revenge for all that had occurred.[33] One can see at this point why perhaps the insurgency, such as it was during this period, was so easily overlooked. The first significant attack, which is widely acknowledged to have occurred, not counting some instances of sabotage, did not occur until April 1963 when Musallim and members of his family attacked a lorry from the John Mecom Oil Company. Perhaps the target is symbolic in that people feared their resources would be stolen from them or wanted to attract attention to grievances. Things moved forward from this point, and after a visit to Saudi Arabia, which appeared to have resulted in arms being donated, attacks of a similar nature, but often involving land mines, began to occur on a fairly frequent basis: nothing too dramatic, the classic guerrilla tactics of ambush, strafing, and planting land mines. Over the course of 1964, the attacks grew both bolder and more frequent, and more people were drawn to the rebels' cause from both within and outside Dhofar. Things were becoming sufficiently bad in Dhofar for units of the SAF to begin to make brief tours to the province and for there to be plans laid to bring troops down from the north for both specific missions and for more extended tours.[34]

There were also lulls between attacks, some extended, as key leaders of the rebels moved in and out of Dhofar. Clearly much work was going on to build up the number of rebels and to secure sources of support. By 1965 the rebellion was being taken rather more seriously, and there were plans to hold Operation *Rainbow* in May, which involved large elements of the Muscat Regiment along with air support. Counterinsurgency during this period involved the classic tactics of cordon-and-search operations. One indication of the scale of the likely problem also came in May 1965 when, as Peterson reported, Iranian intelligence intercepted a dhow full of Dhofaris heading for Oman who had been trained in Iraq. "Naively," he said, "everyone in the group carried photos of themselves with weapons and there were lists of sympathizers in Dhofar on the dhow."[35] This led to around 30 of those on the list being arrested and

the first breakthrough against the rebels being made. It seemed as if the Omani government was finally making some progress at the end of this first phase of the conflict.

The "official" chronology at this point goes as far as identifying, but not really analyzing, a number of factors that were considered to be significant in either enabling the insurgency or preventing the government from dealing with the problem as it grew. The following is an analysis of some of the factors raised in the chronology.

The Character of the Sultan and His Advisers

This is perhaps an important point given that all political power was vested in one place. However, given the struggle that Sultan Sa'id bin Taimour had been through to secure and unify his domains, his success in rebalancing Oman's finances, his independent mind, suspicions of Britain's reliability and motivations, as well as his success in using force to crush the Imamate rebellion, it never seemed likely that Taimour would seek to accommodate the rebels in the south; view them as an equally valid threat as the Imamate rebels; or would be willing to waste resources and return to debt to fund development or, in his eyes, unnecessary armed forces expansion.

If External Support for the Rebels Could Have Been Prevented at the Outset

This was always somewhat unlikely, since a significant early source of funds was diasporic and Oman's borders were far from secure. Coupled with the desire of communist and Arab nationalist regimes to spread their ideology and attempt to destabilize other states, this was always unlikely to be achievable. Perhaps there was more that Britain could have done in South Yemen while it was in control, but given that it could not prevent external aid flowing to rebel groups fighting against British rule there, this was never realistically achievable.

The Attitude of Neighboring States

This was either hostile (Saudi Arabia had supported the earlier Imamate rebels) or disengaged: the rebellion was too small to cause alarm and other neighbors were either under British tutelage in terms of security and foreign affairs or were paying attention to other matters closer to home. It is difficult to see how British or Omani efforts could have had any real impact at this early stage in either mobilizing assistance for Oman or in dissuading hostile neighboring states from supporting the rebels.

The Effectiveness of the Dhofar Force and the Omani Askers[36]

This is an important point—not only were forces small in number, they were also undergoing slow modernization and a degree of reorganization as a result of British investment in the SAF in the aftermath of the Imamate rebellion. This meant that the main body of the armed forces was in the north leaving less well-organized units in the south with no combat experience from the Imamate war.

The Limitations on the United Kingdom's Freedom of Action

There were a number of limitations here, first having already effectively been forced to fight and win the Sultan's war against the Imamate for him. Britain was understandably reluctant to be sucked in again. There was therefore little political appetite for the deployment of British troops, especially after the election of the Labor government under Harold Wilson. Britain was also faced with a number of other significant foreign policy issues in the region, which demanded more attention, and, finally, because Oman was a sovereign nation and Sultan Sai'd was not always amenable to receiving advice—however well intentioned—there were real constraints on what Britain could have done to force him to adopt a "hearts and minds" approach or even to realize that a significant problem may have been developing in the south of the country.

The Quality of the Intelligence Available

This was crucial—the quality of the intelligence infrastructure in the south, in particular, was especially poor. Thus, without good quality and sufficient information, there was inadequate awareness of the threat, its nature and its potential to suitably raise alarm bells for any of the other earlier factors to have been addressed politically.

When one adds the further factor of the overwhelming concentration on the north of the country and the desire to prevent a recurrence of the Imamate rebellion, it becomes even clearer why the threat in the south received little real attention from either Britain or the Sultanate authorities. One might say that this is a classic case of thinking that the next war was likely to come from the same direction as the last, but there were good reasons why the threat of a reignition of the Imamate rebellion was not some illusory threat. First, the rebellion's main leaders were in exile in neighboring Saudi Arabia, which, still smoldering from its ejection from the Buraimi oasis in 1955, had put relations with Britain into the deep freeze and had armed and funded the previous insurgency. Second, the Iraqis were making moves across the Gulf to destabilize regimes and support Arab nationalist causes (not to mention that Nasser was

attempting to do the same). Third, the rebellion had ended only in 1959 and a good deal of force had been used, including bombing and destroying villages, which did little to reduce grievances against the state held by certain tribes in the interior regions. Finally, the issue of the political status of the interior of the north of Oman was still generating real political heat, the rebels had become skilled users of propaganda, and the issue had lodged itself firmly at the United Nations.

Thus, given all of this, perhaps the answer to the question "Could the rebellion have been nipped in the bud during this early phase?" is, of course, "yes," but ultimately this probably does not matter. First, because clearly there were too many political, financial, and practical impediments to this occurring, and, second, and more important, because events later in the conflict after 1967 meant that even had the early rebellion been defeated through force of arms, it is extremely likely that it would have been reignited (or a new rebellion begun) at a later stage anyway given the nature of the Cold War context and the spread of Marxist sentiments.

PERIOD II: MAY 27, 1965–DECEMBER 31, 1967

This second period marked the further development of the insurgency as it began to build and transform into a more significant threat. The date chosen to mark the beginning of this period is symbolic in that it represents the point at which a permanent SAF presence in Dhofar began. Clearly the threat posed by the insurgency had been belatedly recognized, although the level of the commitment to the region by the SAF was still rather modest. In effect, much of this period can be characterized by the metaphor of a pair of scales. As each side attempted to escalate and to ramp up its efforts, the other side was able to respond fairly readily. The end of this period coincides with the early British withdrawal from its responsibilities in neighboring South Arabia and its rather ignominious retreat from Aden itself, which set the tone for the following period—although in Dhofar itself in 1967, it began to seem like the SAF might finally be getting the upper hand against the insurgency.

The period began not only with the permanent presence of SAF forces indicating the recognition and the growing scale of the problem but also with a more significant development with the insurgency. If the first phase had been somewhat sporadic, this new period was to become more intense, more political, and bitter. The rebels began to organize themselves more formally in response to the increasing organization of the Sultanate's response to the rebellion. This commenced with a conference of the rebels being held during early June 1965 in which the disparate elements of the rebellion were cohered into a new body, the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF), with the express intention of removing both the

Sultanate and the British presence and influence in Oman. The new body was organized around a central committee of 18 men and made its presence felt with three attacks on the same day. Although these attacks were no different to those that preceded the formation of the DLF, they were important psychologically and politically. Indeed, the DLF itself dated the beginning of the rebellion from this date: June 9, 1965.

The rest of 1965 saw the first real engagements occur between the SAF and the newly formed DLF, which (from the outside) was holding together quite well given the coalitional nature of the organization, which brought together tribal elements, returning Dhofaris from overseas, and men from the towns, especially the regional capital, Salalah. Internally, however, there was increasing discord over the true nature and aims of the organization and especially between Marxists and those who were more specifically Dhofari nationalists. In what perhaps justified the authorities' focus on the north, there was even division about forming some kind of allegiance with the Imamate rebels from the north, which also fed into tensions between elements of the DLF.[37] Throughout the period in question, it is unclear just how large the DLF were, with figures ranging from the low hundreds to perhaps some 600 men who had involvement in the organization. Peterson puts a more specific figure of around 70 men who were fighting in the newly formed Dhofar Liberation Army.[38] It is also clear the Saudis were still offering both moral and material assistance to the rebels despite the growing Marxist influence within the movement.

In terms of the counterinsurgency response, the period was something of a mixed bag. The newly arrived SAF began to take the fight to the enemy from the outset and in particular in response to the attacks of June 9. There were a number of contacts in June 1965 and through the summer before calm prevailed again until the autumn when in October and especially November the rebels had been resupplied by the Saudis. The rebels began to engage the SAF more regularly and made attacks on the government forts at Mirbat on November 8 and Sadh on November 30. It was becoming clear that the SAF was not large enough to cover its responsibilities in northern Oman let alone be stretched to meet the needs of fighting in the south as well. The fighting that had intensified toward the end of 1965 continued into 1966, with multiple attacks on SAF and oil company convoys. The new year also saw the first British casualty of the war when on March 13, 1966, Captain Woodman, a British officer serving with the Northern Frontier Regiment of the SAF was killed during an ambush. Perhaps one of the major events of 1966 was the attempt on Sultan Sa'id's life on April 26 by a number of the troops of the Dhofar force he was inspecting. This was however unsuccessful, and the culprits were either killed or wounded.[39] Only the element made up of the former

slaves had remained loyal; the tribal elements had then gone over to the rebels, and the few that remained were deeply suspect.

If it was needed, this event probably brought home to both the Sultan and everyone else the true gravity of the threat and led to further operations against the rebels. At this point it is worth noting that the nature of the operations was determined by the climate of the province whereby there was an annual lull during the summer months when the southwest monsoon leads to dense mists forming on the *jebel*, making movement difficult for both sides. A further important event during 1966 was the only direct British operation, as aside from the security of the RAF base in Salalah and the provision of loan service personnel to serve in specific roles in SAF, there were no British forces in Oman. This operation did not even take place in the Sultanate but across the border in October 1966 in the then still British-controlled South Yemen at the town of Hauf, which had become something of a base for rebel activity. While the operation was not as successful as it might have been—and, for reasons that still puzzle some, was not repeated—British troops still managed to detain some rebels, intercept supplies, disrupt their opponents, and make them more cautious in some of their activities.

The year had been dramatic, but when looked at from a more strategic level, the fighting had reached something of a plateau with neither side really able to gain the upper hand over the other. There had been some intense fighting though, and the counterinsurgents had been on a steep learning curve. The rebels were suffering from the increasing divisions in their leadership, from the widespread activity of the SAF preventing them from having a rear area to which to retreat, and from the inevitable feast and famine nature of their supply chain. This period is usefully explored in Peter Thwaites's memoir,[40] which contains useful insights into the evolution of tactics and some of the constraints the SAF faced in terms of orders from the Sultan and on the issues of numbers and equipment. There had been moves to create a new unit to supplement the strength of the SAF, and the Desert Regiment was formed to address this constraint, but the counterinsurgents still faced problems with a lack of good quality intelligence, reliable maps, sufficient local knowledge, and a lack of air support, which could have transformed their chances.

Despite these constraints, 1967 was to be a better year for the SAF when it finally began to seize the advantage and tried to establish itself on the *jebel* and to try not only to avoid the classic ambush points but to turn the tables and attempt to ambush the rebels themselves. The DLF had been severely reduced, and the SAF appeared to be growing in strength and confidence, even arranging a firepower demonstration on August 9, which Peterson describes as "attended by . . . an assembled crowd of 4,000–5,000 . . . [t]he hour long demonstration was carried out with

25-pounder and 75mm guns, and SOAF rocket firing Provosts."[41] This was another point at which the divided, weakened DLF could have been finished off, however, just as before the SAF could not be sure how weak the DLF was. The SAF was only living hand-to-mouth let alone able to really build up its strength effectively or quickly because of the severe budgetary constraints facing the Sultanate. The first export of oil did not occur until September 1967 and even then in modest quantities, and Britain had cut its subsidy to the Sultan months before this in anticipation of the oil revenues beginning to flow. What made things worse was that had the divisions among the rebels been exploited at this point by some carefully calibrated incentives and gestures on behalf of the government, then the rebels could have been divided and rendered even less effective. It seems that the Sultan's attitude of dealing severely with those who disobeyed him, coupled with the poor advice and lack of a vision among advisers on the future of Oman, prevented this opportunity being taken. It was to be the last one for some considerable time.

PERIOD III: JANUARY 1, 1968–SEPTEMBER 30, 1970

During this period both the nature and intensity of the insurgency changed radically. This is critical when combined with the wider Cold War context of proxy war, destabilization, and the seemingly unstoppable spread of Marxist ideologies—in particular, with what was occurring in South Yemen. This had become a Marxist-run state with the victory of the National Liberation Front (NLF) over their Nasserite-inspired rivals, the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY), in the brief but brutal internecine conflict, which ignited the moment the last British troops had left Aden.[42] In many ways, the advent of a secure rear area and consistent supplies led to a transformation in the conflict, and in short order from the SAF having finally established a lead, this was not simply taken away, but by the end of the period the situation had been transformed and the rebels were in the ascendant, controlling all of the mountains and the coastal towns of the west of the province, Rakyut falling last in August 1969. The government was essentially left with just the control of the region's capital, yet even Salalah—the RAF base after August 1968—was coming under regular mortar attack. The situation was worsened by the seeming indecision of Sultan Sa'id who was slow in approving further expansion of the SAF (although some new equipment including modern rifles and Strikemaster jet aircraft was approved) but was unwilling to allow the implementation of a different counterinsurgency approach based on "hearts and minds." A further major development during this period was the change in the explicit nature of the rebellion itself. The old tensions within the DLF came to a head,

and with the new support of the neighboring NLF, the DLF was transformed in September 1968 into the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG), an avowedly Marxist grouping with far wider goals than simply "liberating" Dhofar. As Peterson sees it, this was perhaps another opportunity to defeat the rebels since those original insurgents were increasingly alienated from the cause by Marxists who had little time for Islamic tradition or tribal culture.[43] Yet this was not taken because of an unwillingness on behalf of the Sultan to embrace a different strategy.

The situation in Oman was clearly not just on the slide: it had begun to look terminal. With Britain having announced that it would withdraw from the Gulf by the end of 1971, it became much harder for a last ditch rescue effort led by British troops, naval and airpower to take place, not least with the rise of a new rebel group in the north of Oman, the National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Occupied Arabian Gulf (NDFLOAG), which led attacks on SAF installations, particularly the one at Izki on June 12, 1970. This was later followed at the end of 1970 by fears of an Iraqi-trained rebel group being landed on the Musandam Peninsula, Omani soil that controlled the crucial shipping lanes of the Strait of Hormuz. This necessitated a British operation to secure the peninsula.[44]

In the face of a rapidly deteriorating situation, imminent British withdrawal, and the inflexibility of Sultan Sa'id, a palace coup was launched on July 23, 1970, which successfully deposed Sa'id and led to his son Qaboos ascending to the throne and Sa'id retreating into exile at The Dorchester Hotel in London.[45] Sa'id has often been unfairly criticized for his role[46] but was in many ways a very successful monarch considering the state he inherited. Nevertheless, he was losing his touch after almost 40 years on the throne, and it was time for a fresh approach and for the momentum to be regained.

PERIOD IV: OCTOBER 1, 1970–DECEMBER 31, 1972

This is perhaps the pivotal period of the campaign in which the strategy was transformed and Britain began to exert more effort to support the new Sultan. The new strategy had actually been designed by Lt. Colonel Watts of the SAS in a visit to Oman early in 1970 long before the coup d'etat in July, but it was not implemented until October that year when the SAS presence had built up. This presence was expanded the following year and renewed by the British government over the course of the remaining years of the conflict. The overall aim of the plan was simple and was focused more on civilian objectives than purely military ones, although the improvement and expansion of the SAF was a critical

element in the campaign's overall success. The simple goal was "to secure Dhofar for development" and broadly speaking proceeded along a five-point plan of action, which can be summarized as follows: 1. Improve intelligence.[47] 2. Develop an information service to deliver the government's perspective to those who were both neutral and committed to the rebellion. 3. Deliver medical and other humanitarian aid to the *jebelis* and try to improve their lives. 4. Provide effective veterinary services, as this would improve their livelihoods.[48] 5. Directly involve the Dhofaris in the fight for the Sultan and against the rebels.

This last involved the issuing of a general amnesty, with appropriate financial incentives to get disaffected rebels and *jebelis* to join the government side and was the only overt military aspect to the plan. Led by small teams of the SAS, these surrendered enemy personnel (SEP) were formed into units known as *Firqa* and used their knowledge of the terrain and enemy tactics to turn the tables on the rebels in the mountains. While this strategy was broadly successful, it was not without its difficulties and there is some debate in the literature about some of the claims that have been made about its transformational impact on the campaign.[49]

Other developments during this period when both the rebels and the SAF were escalating the conflict included a new strategy to exploit the division between Islam and Marxism among the population and the rebels and growing expansion of the SAF and the establishment of a dedicated HQ in Dhofar to coordinate the conduct of the campaign. RAF Salalah was now coming under almost daily attack, which necessitated the deployment of elements of the RAF Regiment to protect it. They were soon joined by a Royal Artillery detachment, which could target rebels on the *jebel* to drive them back from the base and prevent mortar attacks.

As the SAF grew, it began to try to regain a more permanent hold on the mountains and to be more active in operations there, especially from the beginning of 1971. This was later expanded to the first major "presence ops," of which one of the most significant, Operation *Jaguar*, began in October 1971 with the aim of securing as much of the eastern section of the *jebel* as possible. This was the beginning of the slow moves to both bottle up and sweep the insurgency back toward its bases in Yemen. Peterson describes Operation *Jaguar* as, "signal[ling] a great turning point: it produced the first permanent base on the Jebel, and from it date all SAF offensives in Dhufar [*sic*], which led to . . . eventual victory."[50] Operation *Simba*, launched in 1972 to establish a strategic army position on the Omani-Yemeni border at Sarfait on a key rebel supply route from their base at Hauf, was a key consolidatory mission, which helped the SAF to gradually dominate the *jebel*.

This later entailed bombing operations and clandestine raid on Hauf after the Yemenis had provoked border skirmishes by attacking the Omani fort at Habarut.

Another key development during this period that built into real momentum that lasted for the rest of the war was the expansion of the Omani Air Force (SOAF) and in particular the arrival of further helicopters from both Britain and Iran. This marked the beginnings of assistance from other regional states in a variety of forms, financial (even from Saudi Arabia), material, and direct military assistance, with personnel beginning to arrive from Jordan to assist with Special Forces missions and intelligence activities.

As the pressure began to rise on the rebels, they made mistakes, perhaps their largest—if only in psychological terms—was their decision on July 19, 1972, to attack the small garrison at the Mirbat fort to the east of Salalah. An estimated 250 rebels assaulted the beleaguered garrison who were led by nine men from the SAS. This led, thanks to the timely arrival of reinforcements and an air bombardment, to the defeat of the rebel assault and a decisive victory. It was clear that the rebels now no longer had the upper hand and could not defeat the SAF in open battle—the tide had clearly turned.[51]

PERIOD V: JANUARY 1, 1973–DECEMBER 4, 1975

The final period can be usefully described as long but comprised of incremental successes culminating in a series of operations in 1975, which were designed to contain and eliminate the remaining sizeable pockets of resistance on the western end of the *jebel*. In terms of strategy and tactics, little had really changed; it was more the case of the plans being sped up and operations intensified. This was greatly facilitated by the arrival of significant development spending in Dhofar, further expansion of the SAF and the Air Force, as well as greater confidence. But in terms of speeding up the implementation of the plan, it was the arrival in large numbers of foreign troops, particularly from Iran, as well as the Abu Dhabi Defense Force agreeing to help patrol northern Oman, which thus freed up SAF troops for operations in the south. This in turn meant that the plan to contain and defeat the rebels all the way back to Yemen was rapidly rolled out. The construction of three "lines," which divided up the *jebel*, interdicting rebel supply lines, making movement difficult, and offering hard points against which groups of rebels could be trapped by SAF and SAS/*Firqa* sweeps, was of great importance to eventual victory. These lines, the Sarfait, Hornbeam, and Damavand,[52] were expensive to construct and drained large amounts of manpower resources, but given that the Iranian troops were ideally suited to this work, it further freed up SAF troops for offensive sweep operations between the lines, enabling the counterinsurgents to clear the mountains and keep them clear.

As by the end of 1974 it seemed as if the PFLOAG was firmly on its knees and ripe for the picking, the SAF duly launched a major operation against one of the rebels' remaining strongholds, the Shirshitti

cave complex. The operation was unsuccessful and led to a number of casualties. This perhaps marked a lesson that the rebels were not going to give in so easily, and the rest of 1975 was spent in dealing with the remaining rebels in the western part of Dhofar where they had been progressively bottled up, thanks to the success of the strategy.[53]

Thus, when on December 4, 1975, Sultan Qaboos was able to declare victory having been advised that "Dhofar was safe for development," it was with a little surprise on behalf of all involved that circumstances had been turned around and that the rebels had been defeated so quickly. Most estimates in 1973–74 had been placing the end of the war around the period 1977–78.

Clearly the victory had been hard won and was made up of multiple components and a good deal of luck. Speaking at the Anglo-Omani Society in London on January 25, 1977, Brigadier John Akehurst who had commanded the Dhofar Brigade put the victory down to a set of eight important features:

1. Sultan Qaboos' succession and immediate liberal reforms.
2. Sufficient money to expand and equip the armed forces.
3. Joint civil/military control throughout.
4. Airpower.
5. The Iranian contribution.
6. Use of the discovery that the enemy committee system of politicomilitary control, even at unit level, was very slow to digest and react.
7. The government could offer so much more than the enemy.
8. Communism and Islam are simply incompatible.[54]

While this list is not comprehensive and the emphasis is given differently by others involved as well as by those who have researched the subject since, it does give a useful summary of the factors involved and demonstrates that a mix of resources, direction, coercion, and development were key to victory.

THE AFTERMATH

With the announcement that the war was effectively over at the end of 1975 came the hope that it was indeed done, a mere decade after the DLF believed it had begun. What instead transpired was a continuing need both to combat the remaining rebels and to continue the development efforts in Dhofar. The bulk of the hard work had been done though, and a process of drawdown was slowly begun by the British: the SAS largely left in September 1976 and the RAF airbases were removed over the course of 1977.[55] Iranian troops remained until just before the Iranian Revolution, but British Loan Service Personnel continued to play an important role, as did contract officers.[56]

THE STATEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

While the direct military campaigning was ongoing, there were other key elements and changes occurring in the Sultanate. Thus, although it is important and profitable to study the military side in its own right, one cannot easily divorce the success that the military campaign was having after 1970 from the wider attempts essentially to build a modern state from scratch. In 1969 the Sultanate's administrative structures were rudimentary at best and outside of the main oil company, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), and the SAF, these structures were virtually unrecognizable to modern eyes. What occurred from late 1970 onward was nothing short of a transformation in government structures and procedures, as well as in terms of the demands placed on the state and its nascent bureaucracy. Oman essentially embarked on a process of intensifying the conduct of the war in the southern province, constructing a state, and building up its infrastructure from virtually nothing—in just five years. It was a truly remarkable achievement, and it is the rapidity and the visibility of the progress made in the development sphere—schools, roads, hospitals, ports, electricity, agricultural transformations, clinics, police, housing, and water management, to name just a few elements—which enabled the state to secure its position and its legitimacy not just in the north but also in Dhofar. The way in which the state was able to organize its war effort and rapidly expand its armed forces was also vital and is tied to this wider process of development and statebuilding.[57] Ultimately it is this transformation in the vision and achievement of the Omani state that facilitated victory in the counterinsurgency campaign. The change of tone and the vision created for the new Oman dealt with any real grievances and made people feel a part of the new enterprise.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that in many ways the Dhofar war can indeed be described as a "model campaign." This is not to say that mistakes were not made or opportunities were not missed; there were numerous constraints in place, and Britain's role was not always as extensive as perhaps it could have been even after the pivotal change of 1970. The temptation is always to extract lessons from successful counterinsurgency campaigns, yet this is not always advisable. What happened in Oman was unique and was facilitated by a set of circumstances that are unlikely to occur again. Like many other counterinsurgency campaigns, that in Dhofar entailed a lot of trial and error, relearning of lessons hard won elsewhere, and not a little good fortune. Despite this, it is evident that the campaign was well fought, particularly after 1970 when the right general approach was taken. The campaign was probably more brutal and coercive than the

picture generally given in the literature, but it was guided by a genuine "hearts and minds" approach, which involved thoughtful use of allies, the whole of the Omani state, and a central role for Britain, which would be difficult to replicate today. There are both tactical and operational lessons to be learnt from this campaign, particularly about intelligence, propaganda, air support, psychological operations (psy-ops), the role of special forces, the use of coethnic troops and militias, civil aid, veterinary services, supply, embedding of expertise, division of territory, local knowledge, and operational planning. There is undoubtedly more work to be done on these (and other) themes, which will be useful for future counterinsurgencies. Indeed, more widely, the academic literature on the Dhofar war as a whole is still rather limited, and it is likely that there will be more extensive reassessments and critiques of the conflict as it receives more scholarly attention. Indeed, the first rumblings of these debates can perhaps now be seen,[58] but what is clear is that the Dhofar war proves that in theory all wars, even counterinsurgencies, are winnable given a sound understanding of the conflict and when armed with sufficient will and resources. This is even more the case when one seeks to learn lessons not merely from the military but also the political side of the conflict, too.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Col. Alexander Alderson, " 'Partnering' with Local Forces: A British Army Perspective," in Military Assistance to a Foreign Country: Army, *Tactique*, no. 23 (2012): 19–23, available in PDF from . . .www.cdef.terre.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/. . . /Doctrine23us.pdf

2. Ranulph Fiennes, *Where Soldiers Fear to Tread* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975).

3. John Akehurst, *We Won a War: The Campaign in Oman 1965–1975* (Salisbury: Michael Russell, 1982).

4. David Arkless, *The Secret War: Dhofar, 1971–72* (London: William Kimber, 1990).

5. Peter Thwaites, *Muscat Command* (London: Leo Cooper/Pen & Sword, 1995).

6. Ian Gardiner, *In the Service of the Sultan: A First Hand Account of the Dhofar Insurgency* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2006).

7. Andrew Higgins, *With the SAS and Other Animals: A Vet's Experiences during the Dhofar War 1974* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2011).

8. Bryan Ray, *Dangerous Frontiers: Campaigning in Somaliland and Oman* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2008).

9. John Akehurst, *Generally Speaking: Then Hurrah for the Life of a Soldier* (Norwich: Michael Russell, 1999).

10. Ken Perkins, *A Fortunate Soldier* (London: Brassey's, 1988).

11. Tony Jeapes, *SAS Operation Oman* (London: HarperCollins, 1980).

12. Peter De La Billiere, *Looking for Trouble: SAS to Gulf Command* (London: HarperCollins, 1995).

13. Paul Sibley, *A Monk in the SAS* (Spitzerwize, 2009).

14. Anthony Kemp, *The SAS Savage Wars of Peace—1947 to the Present* (London: John Murray, 1994).

15. Peter Ratcliffe, *Eye of the Storm: Twenty-Five Years in Action with the SAS* (London: Michael O'Mara Books, 2001).

16. For a solid and brief overview, see, Jim White, "Oman 1965–1976: From Certain Defeat to Decisive Victory," *Small Wars Journal*, 2008. Available at http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs- temp/93-white.pdf

17. Interview with Gen. Ken Perkins, Commander Sultan's Armed Forces, 1975–77, Telephone, November 19, 2007.

18. J. E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy* (London: Saqi Books, 2007).

19. Described as "one of the world's leading authorities on Oman," Calvin H. Allen Jr., "Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy, and Oman: Politics and Society in the Qaboos State (Review)," *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 1 (2010): 143–46.

20. Fred Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans* (London: Saqi Books, 2001); see also Fred Halliday, *Mercenaries: Counter Insurgency in the Gulf* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1977); and Fred Halliday, "Counter-Insurgency in Oman," *Gulf Studies*, no. 1 (April 1976): 13–35.

21. Walter C. Ladwig, III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19, no.1 (2008): 62–88; Geraint Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965–1975," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32, no. 2 (2009): 271–305; and Marc R. De Vore, "A More Complex and Conventional Victory: Revisiting the Dhofar Counterinsurgency, 1963–1975," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 1 (2012): 144–73.

22. These quotations are both taken from the article's abstract indicating their importance to the article's argument.

23. Ian Gardiner offers an interesting and seemingly balanced insight into the Iranian role, but this is a surprisingly lively debate at times and was ongoing among British officers and officials interviewed in 2006–08.

24. DEFE 13/779, Dhofar Campaign, opened in December 1965, but much of the work on the formal chronology was conducted during 1977. The chronology actually ends in December 1975, but there are elements that were clearly intended to be fed into a continuation of the chronology up to at least 1975. Thus, for the sections after 1972, this chapter relies (in particular) more upon Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*; work conducted for James Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman: Political, Military and Diplomatic Relations at the End of Empire* (London: IB Tauris, 2014); Ken Perkins, "Oman, 1975: The Year of Decision," *RUSI Journal* 124, no. 1 (1979): 38–45; and Penelope Tremayne, "Guevara through the Looking Glass: A View of the Dhofar War," *RUSI Journal* 119, no. 3 (1974): 39–43.

25. For a full history, see Robert Alston and Stuart Laing, *Unshook till the End of Time: A History of Relations between Britain and Oman, 1650–1970* (London: Gilgamesh Publishing, 2012).

26. James Worrall, "The British Historical View of Oman and Ibadism," in *Oman and Overseas*, edited by Michaela Hoffman-ruf and Abdulrahman Al Salimi (New York/Zurich: Olms, 2013), 299–312.

27. This is an element that is visible among a number of other important themes surrounding the war in James Worrall, "Transitioning in and out of COIN: Efficiency, Legitimacy and Power in Oman," in *At the End of Military Intervention: Historical, Theoretical and Applied Solutions to Transition, Handover and Withdrawal*, edited by Robert Johnson and Timothy Clack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

28. David Smiley, *Arabian Assignment* (London: Leo Cooper, 1975).

29. For a full exploration of this conflict, see J. E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies—The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy* (London: Saqi Books, 2007), 62–182.

30. For more on the context, see Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman*, chap. 1.

31. J. E. Peterson, "Oman's Diverse Society: Southern Oman," *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 2 (2004): 254–69.

32. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 186–87.

33. This at least seems the most likely explanation, as the sheer banality of the story has the ring of truth. It is explained more fully in Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 188–89.

34. See David Gwynne-James and Alan Williams, "Recollections of Service in the Sultan's Armed Forces, Muscat and Oman, 1962–1964," *Asian Affairs* 41, no. 3 (2010): 399–421.

35. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 192–93.

36. *Askers*, the English plural of the Arabic/Swahili word *Askari*, originally meaning simply "soldier" (in fact, it originally came to Arabic from the Persian word *lascar*), came to mean simply locally raised troops and was spread throughout most of the European colonial empires and beyond.

37. For more on this, see, especially, Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 194–95.

38. Ibid., 196.

39. J. E. Peterson, "Oman: The 1966 Assassination Attempt on Sultan Sa'id b. Taymur," Arabian Peninsula Background Note, No. APBN-004, August 2004, http://www.jepeterson.net/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/APBN-004_Oman_1966_Assassination_Attempt_on_Sultan_Said.pdf.

40. Peter Thwaites, *Muscat Command* (London: Leo Cooper/Pen & Sword, 1995).

41. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 210.

42. Jonathan Walker, *Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in South Arabia 1962–67* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2005).

43. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 217.

44. See Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman*, chap. 3.

45. For more on this, see Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman*, 72–74.

46. For the case for Sa'id, see Uzi Rabi, *The Emergence of States in a Tribal Society: Oman under Sa'id Bin Taymur* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2006).

47. For more on this, see Clive Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970–1976," *The Middle East Journal* 65, no. 4 (2011): 557–74.

48. Andrew Higgins, *With the SAS and Other Animals: A Vet's Experiences during the Dhofar War 1974* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2011).

49. As Clive Jones puts it in a footnote: "Concern over the effectiveness and reliability of *firqas* is a subject that has been rather underplayed in literature dealing with the Dhofar campaign." See, for example, Major General Tony Jeapes, *SAS Secret War* (London: Harper Collins, 1996). Jeapes, while noting their faults, regards the *firqas* as crucial to the counterinsurgency campaign. By contrast, see FCO 8/2022 Secret: Oman Intelligence Report No. 52 (October 21–November 3, 1973). This report, written by the British military attaché to Muscat, Col. C. E Welch, paints a rather less benign view of their effectiveness. In Clive Jones, "From the Deniable to the Acceptable? Britain, Intelligence and Covert Action in Yemen and Oman 1962–1976," and in Tore T. Petersen, ed., *Challenging Retrenchment: The United States, Great Britain & The Middle East 1950–1980* (Trondheim: Tapir Academic Press, 2010), 169.

50. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 276.

51. Ian Illych Martinez, "The Battle of Mirbat: Turning Point in the Omani Dhofar Rebellion," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 3 (2012): 517–26.

52. Damavand is of course the name of Iran's highest mountain, indicating that it was manned by Iranian troops.

53. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, 346–48.

54. DEFE 13/779, "Text of Brigadier John Akehurst's Address to the Anglo-Omani Society, London, 25 January 1977," Dhofar Campaign, 18.

55. James Worrall, "Britain's Last Bastion in Arabia: The End of the Dhofar War, the Labour Government and the Withdrawal from RAF Salalah and Masirah, 1974–1977," in *Challenging Retrenchment: The United States, Great Britain & The Middle East 1950–1980*, ed. Tore T. Petersen (Trondheim: Tapir Academic Press, 2010), 115–40.

56. Worrall, "Transitioning In and Out of COIN: Efficiency, Legitimacy and Power in Oman."

57. For more detail on this, see James Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman: Political, Military and Diplomatic Relations at the End of Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014).

58. As highlighted in the literature review in the introduction to this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

"Confrontation": Countering Indonesian Insurgency, 1963–66

Paul Rosentall

INTRODUCTION

In the years 1963 to 1966, Britain's armed forces fought a little-known conflict against Indonesian regular and irregular forces in Malaysia called "Confrontation": *Konfrontasi* in Indonesian. It was, from Britain's perspective, a model counterinsurgency campaign and deserves far greater recognition and study than it has hitherto received. It came about because of the formation of the Federation of Malaysia. After a costly nine-year counterinsurgency campaign against predominantly ethnic-Chinese communist terrorists (CTs), Malaya gained independence from Britain in August 1957.[1] Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first prime minister of Malaya, wished to prevent political dominance of the large Chinese population in the country, so in May 1961 he proposed the merger of Malaya and Singapore with Sarawak, the Sultanate of Brunei, and Sabah to form the Federation of Malaysia.[2] The Tunku assumed that the indigenous peoples of Borneo would act as a counterbalance to the Chinese population and help to preserve the dominant position of Malays within the new federation. Britain backed the proposal because it wanted a stable Malay-dominated democratic government in the region, and, as the Cabinet Defense Committee agreed, "it would probably reduce, and certainly could not increase, our commitment to the external defense of the territories concerned."[3] Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew persuaded Singaporeans that they could not stand alone.[4] Initially there was no opposition to the formation of Malaysia. Indeed, in August 1961 the Indonesian foreign minister, Dr. Subandrio, indicated his government's

approval of the proposal to British officials.[5] However, in 1962 Sukarno, the president of Indonesia, began to speak out against it. Indonesia had gained independence from The Netherlands in 1949 after a violent insurgency campaign.[6] Sukarno experimented with democracy in the early 1950s, but then, backed by the army, he banned most of the political parties in Indonesia.[7] The army then became a political force in its own right, but Sukarno sought to neutralize its power by cultivating the support of the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI), the largest communist party outside the Soviet Union and China. Sukarno was ideologically committed to opposing any political structure that the colonialists left behind that he considered was really intended to preserve their influence (neocolonialism or *Neokim*). Thus, when he perceived Malaysia as a *Neokim* enterprise, he was opposed to it.[8] He propounded a Filipino proposal to form a loose federation between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, to be called Maphilindo.[9] Malaya and Singapore demurred from this idea, so as the entity of Malaysia hardened toward reality, Sukarno's rhetoric became more vitriolic against the proposed federation.[10] The Malayan government looked upon Sukarno with suspicion because he was seen as dangerously sympathetic to the PKI and politically beholden to it.[11] The Indonesian army began to train dissidents and arm potential Indonesian sympathizers, who sought to cross into the North Borneo states to recruit sympathizers, incite trouble, and "persuade" the population not to agree to the Malaysia idea. When that failed, larger bodies of irregulars and, finally, units of the Indonesian forces attacked targets in Malaysia seeking by force to break the federation apart. Under the provisions of the Anglo-Malaya Defense Agreement (AMDA), signed in 1957, the United Kingdom accepted responsibility for the defense of Malaya against external aggression and, during discussions on forming greater Malaysia in 1961, London and Kuala Lumpur agreed that the AMDA would be extended to cover the successor state.[12] This mechanism tied Britain into defending Malaysia when Indonesian belligerence began and made it difficult politically for her to do other than see the conflict through.

POLITICAL FACTORS

In the 1960s the world was a volatile place. Nuclear war had been avoided during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, but trouble flared up around the globe. During "Confrontation," Britain sent troops to Aden, Cyprus (as part of a U.N. force), East Africa, and British Guiana, and faced a Unilateral Declaration of Independence by Rhodesia.[13] These commitments stretched Britain's armed forces. Southeast Asia was seen as a vital area of interest for the United States and the United Kingdom. Both, together with Australia and New Zealand, were members of the

Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), set up to provide stability to the region and to deter communism.[14] The 1963 Defense White Paper emphasized the importance of Britain's contribution toward "the containment of communism" in Southeast Asia.[15] U.S. concern about communism spreading in the region led to its growing involvement in South Vietnam. By the end of 1963, the United States had 23,000 military advisers in Vietnam. In March 1964, the first U.S. combat units began to arrive in the country and to prosecute a grim seven-year war against North Vietnam and the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.[16] The Kennedy administration in Washington saw Indonesia, with its 100 million people, as potentially the greatest power in Southeast Asia.[17] The American strategy was to support the Indonesian generals so that after Sukarno's death, they would be in a position to take power and thwart communism. Although the United States supported the establishment of Malaysia, they would not do so if this damaged its relations with Indonesia.[18] Britain maintained a presence east of Suez to guarantee its oil supplies and maintain its lines of communication to Australia and New Zealand. It retained 17 Gurkha Division based in Singapore (of which 28 Commonwealth Brigade, comprising British, Australian, and New Zealand battalions, was a part) together with significant naval and air forces.[19]

During Confrontation, there were moves to reach agreement between Indonesia and Malaysia through political dialogue. Initially, Sukarno sought to prevent the Federation of Malaysia actually forming.[20] Despite cross-border raids beginning, a cordial meeting between Rahman and Sukarno in Tokyo in May 1963 gave hope for a peaceful resolution of the issue. The United Nations organized a meeting between Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines in Manila in July/August in which the Maphilindo idea emerged. The Malaysians disagreed with the idea but agreed that the United Nations should send a commission to determine whether the North Borneo states were prepared freely to accept the federation. It found that Borneo inhabitants had carefully and thoughtfully considered their political future and decided in favor of Malaysia.[21] The verdict was a huge disappointment to Indonesia. The foundation of the Federation of Malaysia (Malaysia Day) duly took place on September 16, 1963. Indonesia stated that it would not recognize Malaysia and broke diplomatic relations. Sukarno began making inflammatory speeches, which included the phrase "*Ganjang Malaysia*" (Smash Malaysia).[22] In addition, the British embassy in Djakarta was ransacked and every British-owned house in the city was sacked.[23] As a result, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended Indonesia's right to draw on loans and American aid programs, which later caused significant economic difficulties.

Armed incursions into Borneo began in earnest, but there were further peace conferences throughout the conflict. U.S.-brokered talks took place

in Bangkok in January 1964 and March 1964, but again no progress was made.[24] Sukarno then believed he could get no more political or economic assistance from the United States and was reported as saying, "To hell with your aid."[25] Consequently, American attitudes to Indonesia began to change. In June 1964, there were talks in Tokyo, but these broke up once more without result.[26] Following attacks on West Malaysia later in 1964, including paratroops landing, Malaysia produced captured Indonesian weapons at a debate in the United Nations, causing uproar.[27] A Security Council resolution deploring Indonesian aggression and calling for the parties to settle their dispute amicably gained a majority of nine to two in favor, but it was vetoed by the Soviet Union.[28] However, the attacks on West Malaysia made Australia and New Zealand pledge their troops to resist further attack.[29] The attacks, coupled with Indonesia's growing rapprochement with communist China, led the United States into fully backing Malaysia and Britain. At the end of 1965, Indonesia withdrew from the United Nations in protest at the impeding adoption of a Malaysian seat on the Security Council.[30] By 1966, Indonesia was almost isolated politically and internal problems brought the overthrow of the Sukarno regime and the end of Confrontation.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

The need to provide forces to fight Indonesian-trained insurgents was not welcomed by the British government. Britain in 1963 was still heavily in debt from World War II and seeking to withdraw from empire, yet the Soviet threat to Europe and Britain's legacy empire commitments forced it to spend 10 percent of its gross national product (GNP) on defense.[31] This slowed economic growth, brought difficulty in paying debts, and hindered development of government social aspirations. A reduction to 7 percent of GNP was sought as the number of uniformed personnel reduced by nearly half with the ending of conscription. However, no defense commitments were cut and these significantly stretched the armed services, especially the army, which had only 165,000 men.[32] The Malayan Emergency had been extremely costly, requiring 24 battalions of troops to be deployed, as part of up to 300,000 security forces personnel overall, to defeat little more than 6,000 CTs.[33] As the campaign went on, the number of British ships, aircraft, and men increased substantially, though never to the number of battalions deployed to Malaya in the 1950s, but the cost of forces east of Suez continued rising above £300 million. Consequently, in 1964 the chancellor of the exchequer, Selwyn Lloyd, forecast that by 1970 it would be £400 million and it would be impossible financially for Britain to support Malaysia; British forces would have to be withdrawn.[34] Fortunately for the United Kingdom, Confrontation ended in 1966.

THE THREAT AND THE BATTLEFIELD

In 1963, the Indonesian Armed Forces posed, on paper, a significant threat. Its army establishment was 200,000 men, with 280,000 thousand reservists, paramilitary, home guard, and police available for operations.[35] The Indonesian navy had a cruiser, destroyers, frigates, fast inshore patrol boats, and Gannet aircraft operable. Its air force deployed fighters, bombers, transport, and reconnaissance aircraft.[36] The threat could not be ignored, but maintenance standards of ships and aircraft were assessed as poor and training not to a high standard. The army command was riven by factional interests, and, crucially, units were trained predominantly for internal security duties, not for general warfare or insurgency fighting. In Malaya and Borneo, Malays and indigenous peoples totaled just over 4.5 million of the combined Malaysian population of 10 million, with Chinese making up just fewer than 4.5 million and Indians nearly 1 million people.[37] Inside the North Borneo states were around 25,000 Indonesian immigrant workers, many of whom posed a potential internal security threat.[38] There were also large communities of ethnic Chinese in Borneo, some suspected of being loyal toward the Communist Party and forming the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO).[39] Indonesia sought to exploit these dissident groups and foment trouble wherever possible, hoping to turn the population away from joining with Malaya into the Federation of Malaysia and, when this failed, to terrorize them and seek to make Britain's AMDA promise untenable.[40]

Most Commonwealth forces were better trained and equipped than their Indonesian counterparts.[41] British troops in the conflict were professionals, and the Gurkhas were also all volunteers. The Gurkha battalions and some of the British troops had recently served in the Malayan Emergency and were jungle trained. All units going to Borneo attended Jungle Warfare School training prior to deployment if they had not done so before.[42]

The main battleground was the island of Borneo, the northern third comprising Sarawak, Sabah, and Brunei, with the Indonesian state of Kalimantan to the south, the two separated by central highlands. Borneo is the third largest island in the world, measuring some 830 miles long by 600 miles in width.[43] The Kalimantan border was almost 1,000 miles long and often ran through dense tropical jungle, along steep mountain ranges, some over 8,000 feet high.[44] Borneo was studded with large rivers: these offered the only real means of traveling inland, as there were few roads and no railways.[45] The weather was tropical: very hot and humid, with two monsoon seasons and thick morning mists over the jungle, which cleared around 10 a.m., and large thunderstorms that built up during most afternoons and produced heavy downpours of rain.[46]

The capital city, Kuching, in Sarawak, located only 30 miles from the border, was deemed to be the center of CCO activities.[47] Communities of indigenous people, who often lived together in longhouses, occupied the jungle areas, and they were often related to groups across the Kalimantan border, with whom they traded and interacted. As the dispute progressed, as well as East Malaysia (Borneo) incursions, there were also many incursions into West Malaysia, but these, while highly significant politically, were not militarily significant compared with the Borneo campaign.

THE BRUNEI REVOLT, DECEMBER 1962

The Brunei Revolt, which began on December 8, 1962, was seen as the catalyst for Confrontation.[48] The revolt's causes were unclear but were probably largely caused by antipathy to the Sultan of Brunei's authoritarian rule coupled with an element of anticolonialism. The Sultan asked for British troops to put down the revolt, which largely comprised of North Kalimantan (Borneo) National Army (*Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara—TNKU*) irregulars and Kedayan tribesmen. Under Plan ALE, three battalions of British and Gurkha soldiers from 99 Gurkha Infantry Brigade, together with two Royal Marines Commandos, were quickly flown or sailed in from Singapore. The rebellion was effectively put down in about three weeks.[49] The revolt had also spilled over into part of Sarawak, but as the rebels sought to find safety in Kalimantan, they were chased by British troops and mopped up by cordons of indigenous tribesmen. These tribesmen, who had been raised and equipped by British and Australian teams in World War II to fight the Japanese, were called out by the British authorities and some of their old commanders who had settled in Sarawak.[50]

BEGINNINGS OF CONFRONTATION AND DETERRENCE, 1963

Tunku Abdul Rahman did not specifically lay the blame for the revolt on the Indonesians, but the Malay press was quick to do so.[51] Intemperate language in Djakarta and Kuala Lumpur was magnified by the press in both countries.[52] Dr. Subandrio, on January 20, 1963, then declared a policy of Confrontation with Malaya over the proposal to form Malaysia. Neither he nor President Sukarno, in a speech on February 13, made clear what Confrontation meant but they alluded to all political, economic, and military measures short of general war.[53] The United Kingdom now considered from intelligence reports that after the Brunei revolt there could now be incursions by Indonesians from Kalimantan into the British North Borneo territories.[54] It stated that although 15,000 to 20,000 men could be available, logistics issues were likely to limit action to a single brigade

group offensive by land or sea and two battalions by air. In addition, there were approximately 1,500 Indonesian border terrorists (IBTs) supported by an unknown number of Indonesian regulars (masquerading as civilians) and local defense guerrillas who posed the most potent immediate threat.

Initially, Britain maintained one brigade HQ with five to six battalions of infantry, together with supporting ships and aircraft (including 12 to 15 support helicopters) in Borneo to deter and confront any incursion by Indonesian forces.[55] In Singapore and Malaya, there were two more brigades of the 17th Gurkha Division, although the Australians and New Zealanders were barred from use in Borneo by their respective governments.[56] There was also a commando helicopter carrier group in the region and various other ships including RAN and RNZN vessels. However, the navy's Achilles' heel was the lack of fast patrol boats to patrol inshore: only small, slow wooden minesweepers were available for the task.[57] The RAF's Far East Air Force (FEAF) deployed Javelin fighters, Hunter fighter-bombers, Canberra bombers, and several maritime, reconnaissance, air transport, and army support (including helicopter) squadrons.[58] British forces could be reinforced by a brigade of 4,000 men from the United Kingdom in nine days if required.[59] In the background was the United Kingdom's ability to send Royal Navy (RN) fleet carrier groups and Royal Air Force (RAF) strategic bombers and all-weather fighters, together with the Strategic Reserve Division, to the Far East in the event of an all-out conflict; frequent deployments of some assets reminded Indonesia that this was the case.[60]

CAMPAIGN PRINCIPLES AND COMMAND AND CONTROL LESSONS

The General Officer Commanding (GOC) 17th Gurkha Division was Major-General Walter Walker, a Gurkha officer who had won three DSOs commanding units fighting the Japanese in Burma and the CTs in Malaya.[61] He became director of operations Borneo, as well as commander British forces (CBF) Borneo.[62] Walker, an experienced jungle warrior, had set up the world-renowned Jungle Training School at Kota Tinggi.[63] He was the architect of victory. On his way to Borneo, he wrote out five campaign principles: jointmanship (unified operations with the three services and police operating together); timely and accurate information (intelligence); speed, mobility, and flexibility for our forces; security of our bases; and domination of the jungle.[64] Some weeks later, after substantial rescue and support operations conducted in January 1963 by British forces when Borneo suffered the worst monsoon flooding in living memory, he added a sixth principle: winning the "hearts and minds" of the people.[65] The flooding saw British forces engaging immediately in rescue and flood relief operations, and this went a long way in winning the

peoples' "hearts and minds" immediately. Walker's six principles proved ideal for Confrontation. The lesson was that clear campaign principles from the outset are essential for conducting counterinsurgency operations.

Walker first established a joint HQ at Labuan, a crucial aspect of his command and control structure, because it determined that this would be a joint campaign, with all three services working together.[66] Throughout the conflict, joint action once more proved to be an essential requirement of a counterinsurgency campaign.

Walker's two commanders in chief Far East (Cs-in-C FE) in succession, Admiral Sir David Luce and Admiral Sir Varyl Begg, bestowed on him essentially operational command (a term not used in the 1960s) of all joint forces in Borneo, directly under the command of the C-in-C himself.[67] This command chain made Walker the joint force commander under the C-in-C Far East (FE) as the joint commander (again terms not used in the 1960s),[68] bypassing the single-service Cs-in-C. It did lead to some difficulties between Walker and all three (in succession) of his own general officers commanding in chief (GOCs-in-C), largely because Walker was a fiery character who did not suffer fools gladly and failed to keep his own GOC-in-C informed of matters affecting the troops the latter "owned" when not in Borneo.[69] Walker's successor, Major-General George Lea, enjoyed the same command chain and was better at keeping his own GOC-in-C informed. As director of operations Borneo, a post agreed by the Malaysian government, Walker was on loan to that government,[70] and he bypassed the previous command powers of the governors of Sarawak and Sabah in prosecuting the campaign.[71] A Malaysian National Defense Council chaired by Rahman determined strategic policy for the campaign, consulting with London through the British High Commission. A lower level committee, which included the chief of staff of the Malaysian Armed Forces and the inspector general of police, as well as the C-in-C FE, determined the direction of the operational campaign, and their policy was transmitted to Walker through the C-in-C FE.[72] He then turned the policy into military action in Borneo. There were local committees in Borneo to ensure that the governors and the local heads of police and administration were kept fully informed and operated the centrally agreed policy in their own areas. The system worked extremely effectively. The lesson is that a clear command chain, a clear execution chain from strategy to tactics, and a joint HQ to harness the strengths and capabilities of all the services are essential in counterinsurgency.

OPERATIONAL PLAN AND LESSONS LEARNED

Having determined his campaign principles, Walker developed his campaign plan. At first he could not see a way to defend North Borneo with the limited number of troops he had, given the distances involved

and the geographical and climatic factors with which his men would have to contend. However, with advice from Borneo veterans of World War II, he saw that much of the mountainous, jungle-covered terrain could not be penetrated easily by large bodies of insurgents. There were few, if any, roads, and so jungle tracks and rivers had to be used and most border crossing points were channeled by the terrain.[73] He therefore developed an early warning system (a screen) involving small patrols of a few men to spot any incursion, backed up by infantry battalions, which were held back from the border. Lieutenant-Colonel John Woodhouse, CO 22 Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment, persuaded Walker that this role was an ideal job for his men, and two squadrons at a time were deployed in Borneo for the task.[74] When two SAS squadrons proved to be insufficient, the Gurkha Independent Parachute Company was committed to the task[75] as was 1 (Guards) Independent Parachute Company.[76] The SAS and paratroopers lived among the people, earning their trust and assisting with medical and other issues, which contributed greatly to the "hearts and minds" campaign, and the four-man teams did a remarkable job in spotting incursions and gaining intelligence and the trust of the local people near to the border. Their activities did much to benefit the "hearts and minds" campaign. Walker later said that 70 SAS troopers in this "screen" role were more important to him than a battalion of 700 infantry.[77] Fifteen hundred local tribesmen were also recruited and trained as border scouts to supplement the forward screen, guard villages, and gather intelligence from both sides of the border.[78] This system, coupled with the overall "hearts and minds" campaign, was so successful that the insurgents found an almost complete lack of support among the local population and could hardly move without being reported.[79] All initial information was passed through an intelligence assessment process to determine its validity, and companies from the major units could then move forward to chase, block, ambush, and destroy the insurgents.[80] The lessons once again are that early warning and good intelligence, from all sources, is key to winning a counterinsurgency campaign and troops highly trained for special operations are essential in the order of battle.

Walker had taken notice of the decisive effect of helicopters during the Brunei Revolt, which had brought vastly increased mobility and improved logistic support to the infantry.[81] He therefore determined to use this much-improved (since Malaya) form of transport to move his troops rapidly in Borneo. Newer and more capable helicopters were being fielded, giving Walker the ability to use these vehicles, though not without some risk, in a fire brigade role. The lesson surely is that commanders and staffs need to recognize and use the emerging capabilities of new technology to the full.

The internal threat from almost 60,000 potentially hostile Chinese and imported Indonesian workers could not be ignored either, and although

this was a police matter, the military acted in support of the police throughout.[82] Troops were on call to assist in internal security duties, as well as counter the external threat from Indonesian-trained groups. The police special branch, working with the army, was able to supply information about local terrorist leaders and their likely hiding places in Sarawak and Sabah, which could then be followed up by patrolling and searching those areas.[83] Sarawak police field force officers were trained in military style to operate in the field, and they often accompanied army patrols in these ventures.[84] The lesson was that police, civil administrative officer, and military cooperation is an essential feature of counterinsurgency campaigns.

MILITARY PHASES OF CONFRONTATION

General Sir William Jackson likened Confrontation to a six-round boxing contest.[85] Round one saw Sukarno trying to prevent the formation of Malaysia by seeking to undermine the Borneo tribes' support of the idea. Round two was the breaking of trade and diplomatic links and the first cross-border raids by TNKU "volunteers." The third round consisted of Indonesian political pressure through the United Nations and an early-1964 Bangkok peace conference coupled with the buildup of regular Indonesian forces in Kalimantan. In round four, Indonesian regular troops began operating in Borneo and in West Malaysia, eliciting British cross-border raids in response, and there was heavy fighting against well-trained troops in dug-in positions: peace talks were held in Tokyo without result during the period and there was fruitless diplomatic activity in the United Nations. Round five saw Singapore withdraw from the federation, shaking Malaysia's position. Finally, in round six, Indonesia's economy spun out of control in the second half of 1965, and there was heavy dissension in Indonesia, leading to Sukarno's overthrow and the end of hostilities.

THE MILITARY CONFLICT—LESSONS LEARNED

While Sukarno sought to undermine the formation of Malaysia politically, the first major cross-border event occurred on April 12, 1963, when a group of 30 TNKU insurgents attacked the police post at Tebedu in Sarawak, killing and wounding three soldiers.[86] It took three hours for a British relief convoy to arrive because of the poor state of the roads. A second attack took place at Gumbang 10 days later.[87] These events resulted in the immediate move of 40 Commando RM to Borneo, with a further battalion of Gurkhas placed on standby to move. Walker now had two brigade HQs (West and East Brigade) and six to seven infantry

battalions in place. To provide mobility for the larger force, a new RAF Whirlwind helicopter squadron was formed in Singapore to supply detachments to Borneo[88] and to supplement the existing Whirlwind and Belvedere aircraft on detachment there.[89] The RN also sent a Wessex helicopter detachment to Borneo to supplement its Whirlwind helicopter detachment.[90] There were no other major incursions during the four months following the first raids, but small-scale incursions continued to occur. Two lessons were learned from the attacks: first, the enemy had the advantage of surprise as long as he could move freely on his side of the border, and, second, speed and flexibility could be battle-winners for the defenders. Walker adjusted his tactics accordingly. He decreed that a platoon was always to be held as a quick reaction force (QRF) ready to fly forward by helicopter, thus reducing reaction time considerably.[91] This was the first of several tactical changes he made, the lesson being that there is a need to maintain operational and tactical flexibility during counterinsurgency operations.

Following the Tebedu raid, Brigadier Barton RM, commanding 3 Commando Brigade, began to build platoon-size bases next to the border in Sarawak, together with dozens of new helicopter-landing pads, many cut from the jungle. This building program was endorsed and expanded by General Walker.[92] More bases were built in other areas along the border. All of these new bases needed to be fortified to withstand the enemy and the weather, and this program involved a significant effort by engineers, the troops themselves, and the supply organization.[93] Landing strips were built to permit light aircraft to resupply some bases; others were supplied through parachute drops, by river transport, and by helicopters.[94] A large logistics organization was required to undertake this work, especially of river transport for fuel and supplies, as preserving helicopter flying hours was essential.[95] The effort was costly, but it reflected the fact that getting logistics right is an essential feature of all military operations and is a major factor underpinning counterinsurgency campaigns.

Helicopter-landing pads and refueling facilities were built at several of the larger bases back from the border, and RN and RAF crews flew Wessex and Whirlwind helicopters from them, colocated with the army units they supported.[96] Soon, AAC crews joined them as they changed from flying fixed wing aircraft to Scout and, later, Sioux helicopters.[97] Air and ground crews spent long periods with their supported units and got to know the local terrain and weather. This was essential when maps were virtually useless at this stage, making landing points in clearings in the jungle very difficult to find, and clouds covered the mountains, and ridges that had to be negotiated.[98] Some considered that helicopters should stay allocated to specific units.[99] While there were advantages brought by gaining local knowledge and improving tri-service esprit de

corps, it was a wasteful system as scarce assets might sit idly on the ground for periods in one place while other units elsewhere needed them for tasks. Tasking helicopters to work with a unit only when required and moving them on to work with other units for their tasking was a more efficient system, improving utilization and avoiding waste.[100] The lesson is that when assets are scarce in a counterinsurgency campaign, central direction and tasking is essential, though there may be occasions when they should be placed in direct support for periods.

Mapping was very primitive at the start as much of Borneo's interior had never been surveyed properly. Air charts often had little information on them, and the existing information was often in the wrong place. This was a great problem to start with, so local knowledge became the only way to fly accurately to support the troops. Consequently, Canberra aircraft were used to photograph the whole of East Malaysia,[101] and survey teams were flown by helicopter to triangulate the hills so that accurate maps could be provided.[102] In counterinsurgency, even with modern satellite mapping, maps of jungle or other areas may still be inaccurate, requiring specialists able to produce new ones.

"Heart and minds" work continued throughout. Basing forts next to villages to protect them meant that the troops from all services got to know the local people and to assist them whenever possible, and this again helped to win their "hearts and minds."[103] The headman's dignity was always upheld: people, animals, and building materials were moved around or brought in. Food handouts were given, advice on crop growing was dispensed, and children's parties were held. There were medical clinics (known as "sick parades") for local people, and casualties were evacuated.[104] Examples such as when a Gurkha company base was built at Ba'kelalan, helicopters frequently included provisions for the local Muruts who had been deprived of their cross-border trade[105] and when a cholera epidemic struck Nanga Gaat, naval helicopters worked with 1 Royal Ulster Rifles to fly the victims to the hospital, often with food, pots, and pans[106] show the lengths taken to win local friendship. All personnel contributed in many ways to win "hearts and minds." General William Jackson is unequivocal. He wrote: "The battle for hearts and minds in Borneo was never lost: in Vietnam and Aden it was never won."[107]

The lesson is clear, winning the "hearts and minds" of the local people is utterly essential in any counterinsurgency campaign, and the British did it splendidly in Borneo.

Knowing that conflicts are not won by defensive measures alone, Walker ensured that troops patrolled the border crossing point areas and the tracks around them.[108] The patrols sought to dominate the area, reassure the local population, and pick up information from the people as they patrolled. Jungle patrolling in Borneo was physically and mentally demanding. The terrain was severe, the jungle was very thick, and the

heat and humidity was very draining to men carrying large loads. Movement was very difficult on foot. It was quite possible at times to take 12 hours to cover just 2 miles.[109] The men therefore had to achieve a high level of physical fitness to be able to move and to operate in the demanding conditions of North Borneo while carrying such loads. The lessons are that commanders must seek to fight an offensive campaign and that troops need to be physically fit to conduct counterinsurgency operations in harsh conditions.

British weapons and equipment of the period were heavier than American or Australian equivalents so efforts were made to reduce weight.[110] Loads were balanced between life support needs and what could be carried over several days, and units reduced the weight of food carried so that men often lost a percentage of their bodyweight while on patrol.[111] Five days was the normal patrol time, though ambush patrols could be longer.[112] Attempts were made to obtain lighter weapons, equipment, and rations to reduce weight and, thus, fatigue, but this took time. Procurement of equipment and clothing appeared to be focused on European needs rather than the specific requirements of other theaters, even though fighting was in progress elsewhere. It is a clear lesson that planners must consider procurement of clothing and equipment in the light of all military requirements worldwide, and not be too narrowly focused.

During the April to September 1963 period, there were some 420 intruders into North Borneo, with 37 being killed and 22 wounded or captured. This showed the value of the constant patrolling being undertaken and the troops' determination to dominate their areas.[113] In jungle warfare, British and Gurkha soldiers adopted the ways of jungle animals.[114] Senses were heightened on patrol so they did not use talcum powder, hair oil, or soap to avoid smells giving away their presence to an enemy. They showed no lights and did not smoke to avoid giving away their positions. Hand signals were used to avoid being heard. They wore floppy hats to prevent noise from helmets hitting trees, patrolled slowly along trails, were ready to react to meeting the enemy in fleeting encounters at any time, and lay for hours in ambush positions if incursions were reported, tied together with rope or string, which could be tugged to alert all members of the patrol. Gurkhas soon displayed outstanding skill at such patrolling.[115] British servicemen grasped the necessary skills to operate effectively in the jungle after jungle training.[116] Jungle operations were physically and mentally demanding, so regular rest and recovery periods away from operations were needed, and a roulement policy was adopted. Gurkhas usually completed a six-month tour on the island, whereas their British counterparts only undertook four-month tours.[117] The lessons are that in counterinsurgency campaigns, excellent training and regular rest periods for troops under combat pressure are essential.

Communicating in Borneo was a real challenge. No communications network existed on the island, or even a radio station broadcasting to the people, so everything had to be built up from scratch. A radio transmitter was flown by helicopter onto Kota Kinabalu, the highest mountain on the island, to allow radio programs, including government information, to be broadcast to the people.[118] Military radio relay and rebroadcast stations were set up on various hills, manned by small detachments of Royal Signals personnel, to bring essential military radio coverage to the battlefield.[119] Air-to-ground communication was patchy, as helicopters were often out of radio contact with their units once they left their base and as the RAF helicopters were not fitted with radios compatible with army ground unit radios, thus reducing their situational awareness. Consequently, a Scout helicopter often had to act as a radio relay between the RAF helicopters and the infantry during operations.[120] The clear lesson is that on operations, including counterinsurgency campaigns, all vehicles and personnel must have radios that allow personnel to communicate with each other to enhance operational efficiency and situational awareness.

Following Malaysia Day, Indonesia began to build up its regular forces in Kalimantan. Crush Malaysia Border Area Command (KOGA) was set up in October 1963 to coordinate incursions into Malaysia.[121] Groups of insurgents began crossing the border more frequently, more widely, and in larger numbers. A major attack by 100 IBTs at Long Jawi in Sarawak on September 28, 1963, killed four defenders and wounded several more.[122] Similarly, on December 29, 1963, 8 Malaysian soldiers were killed and 16 wounded when a 130 IBTs led by 35 Indonesian marines, attacked their post at Tawau in Sabah.[123] This was the worst loss suffered by Commonwealth forces in the campaign. The attack was a strategic error. It demonstrated that this was not a British conflict alone, hardening Malaysian attitudes and leading to large public demonstrations of hatred against Indonesia.[124] The retreat of the IBTs toward Kalimantan was followed up aggressively by well-controlled helicopter-borne infantry, and these were used to great effect, in both follow-up operations, putting in groups of soldiers (known as "stop groups") to block further enemy movement along their known route, hunter groups to chase them and ambush parties to kill them, and making dummy drops of troops to persuade the IBTs to move in the direction of the ambushes.[125] The majority of insurgents in both attacks were killed or captured. British tactics had proved highly successful. The lesson is that tactical decisions in counterinsurgency campaigns, whether by the enemy or one's own forces, may have strategic repercussions and need to be considered in that light.

Helicopters came of age during Confrontation; without them, it would have been impossible for the Security Forces to control such a vast area against the guerrillas.[126] Crews were at risk from a range of aircraft-,

weather- and operations-related factors,[127] yet daily they deployed troops on patrol, evacuated the sick, resupplied them, carried commanders and officers to conferences and liaison meetings, and, importantly, provided the essential logistics to their bases.[128] Walker himself was fulsome in his praise, writing,

> Helicopters proved themselves over and over again to be the real battle-winners. They flew tirelessly over the mountains and along the valleys, placing men exactly where they would do most good. For example, reconnaissance patrols were positioned along the frontier to find and report the enemy, and sections were set down neatly in depth to cut off unsuspecting raiders. A clever company commander with a few "choppers" could so block the guerrillas at every turn that they would think an entire army was at their heels.[129]

Helicopters of all three services provided the mobility over the jungle to meet Walker's campaign plan. The knowledge that they could be evacuated quickly when hurt or wounded provided the troops with a significant morale boost.[130] During operations, commanders flew in helicopters to control the ground forces, notably during an incursion in 1966, when CO 2nd Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles spent 82 hours in a Bell 47 Sioux helicopter commanding his men from the air, using relays of pilots to keep him aloft.[131] Brigadier Cheyne DSO, commanding West Brigade, stated: "I command my brigade with a Scout helicopter. I cannot do it any other way. There is no other way."[132]

Walker confirmed that this was to be a helicopter war and stated that in the Borneo jungle one minute's flying equaled a day's infantry march, one hour in the air covered five days travel on foot, and a battalion using six troop carrying helicopters was equal to a brigade with none.[133] Helicopter operations were conducted with the express directive that the infantry was not to gallop like cavalry over the jungle to assault the enemy but were to be flown covertly to landing sites near to the enemy from which they could move quietly to ambush, surprise, and kill him, while minimizing the risk of being ambushed themselves.[134] It was not without loss: aircraft were hit by ground fire and even shot down and several aircraft were lost in accidents, but attrition rates were low for the number of hours flown.[135] The lesson from Borneo is that helicopters are essential vehicles in counterinsurgency campaigns, conferring tactical agility, mobility, speed, and some protection on ground forces.

In between the major attacks, low level insurgency continued as IBTs sought to set up camps and arms caches in Malaysian territory from which to launch attacks. Patrols, often led by Iban trackers and Sarawak Rangers who usually deployed with a patrol dog, had many individual and small group clashes with the enemy: they set up ambushes, made finds of caches of weapons, and gathered intelligence of IBT activities.[136]

Jungle encounters were of a fleeting nature, and often only the front two or three men of a section were engaged. Analysis of these encounters showed that high-quality jungle patrolling was required, as were good snap-shooting skills, sound fire control, and fire-and-maneuver tactics, together with excellent junior leadership. It was disappointing to find that some of these skills had been lost in only six years since the Malayan Emergency had ended and they had to be recovered and retrained.[137] This shows the clear need to capture lessons learned from campaigns and to keep them under review continually, to recall them for use when required in future conflicts. It also underlined the lesson that constant, *relevant* training is essential in counterinsurgency operations, where tactics change rapidly.

In the face of increasing incursions and attacks, the C-in-C FE, requested the Chiefs of Staff (COS) Committee in London to increase force levels in Borneo to three Brigade HQs and eight major infantry battalions.[138] The chiefs agreed to an increase and, noting the acute shortage of rotary wing assets in the Far East, determined to increase helicopter resources. A further squadron of RAF Whirlwind helicopters and four more Belvedere helicopters were sent from exercise in Libya to Borneo by aircraft carrier.[139] There was further escalation by Indonesian IBTs, with larger groups crossing the border. Walker therefore changed tactics again, and medium artillery pieces were deployed forward to supplement infantry mortars. Following an attack on a forward base that held two guns, Walker discarded artillery unit doctrine that guns should operate as part of a troop and ordered the guns to be deployed singly.[140] Later, the guns were moved by helicopter from place to place, to give the impression of larger numbers of guns deployed.[141] The Indonesians reported that the British appeared to have artillery in every forward base.[142] The lesson for counterinsurgency campaigns is that commanders should not slavishly follow doctrine and must be willing to deviate from it when necessary.

By March 1964, Walker assessed that the number of IBT units inside East Malaysia had increased significantly and Indonesian strength over the border had trebled in number.[143] In addition, Indonesian fighter and other aircraft had frequently crossed the Borneo border. Accordingly, in March 1964, he recommended further reinforcement to double the number of troops in Borneo, including use of the Australian and New Zealand battalions, to preempt a major Indonesian offensive. However, Australia and New Zealand still declined to send troops at this point as they had received U.S. requests to send troops to South Vietnam.[144] He also requested additional aircraft, helicopters and patrol craft, and possible cross-border retaliation. He did not get all that he wanted. British reinforcements were sent to Borneo, so that 3 Brigade HQs and 10 infantry battalion equivalents were put in place to deter incursions. Company

groups were moved forward to the border itself, and the forward operating bases (FOBs) were built up and fortified further, with full artillery and air support available.[145] These adjustments brought further logistic and support challenges to build the bases, resupply them, and conduct patrols from them. The additional troops and bases needed more helicopter support, so more aircraft from the Singapore-based RAF squadrons were sent,[146] plus Malaysian Air Force Alouette helicopters.[147] Walker stipulated that the FOBs were to be held by only a third of the company at a time, with the others out on patrol. In addition, air transport aircraft numbers were increased and Hunter fighter/ground attack aircraft and Javelin fighters were deployed, along with Shackleton Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft and a light antiaircraft gun battery.[148] The fighters were sent to police an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) set up over Borneo on February 28, 1964. Indonesian pilots had a healthy respect for their RAF counterparts, and air incursions over Borneo soon reduced significantly.[149] A guard ship was positioned off the easterly border of Sabah, and naval patrols by smaller vessels increased. Up to 16 naval vessels operated around Borneo, predominantly minesweepers.[150] Finally, HQ 17 Division was sent to Labuan under Major-General Peter Hunt to relieve Walker of a significant administrative burden, so that he could concentrate on operations.[151] The fact that no tensions occurred between Walker and Hunt was largely because of their good personal relations and Hunt's affable nature and his ability to cope with Walker's fiery temperament. These additional resources gave Walker a better array of tools with which to meet the threat. However, they added to the strain on British Army resources and to the financial cost. The lesson is that commanders in counterinsurgency campaigns must be given appropriate tools for their task, even if costs rise. A further lesson is that the equality in rank between Walker and Hunt might have engendered frictions, so rank equivalents must be considered carefully in operations to avoid any needless friction.

Walker's recommendation to Admiral Begg to permit British troops to cross the border to a depth of 2,000 meters was to deny the Indonesians safety across the Kalimantan border. As a result, Begg, having consulted London, authorized "hot pursuit" of Indonesian troops recrossing the border up to a depth of 3,000 yards. The utmost secrecy had to be maintained, so no word of this permission became public knowledge, only one company in each battalion could conduct such operations, and only General Walker himself could authorize each operation.[152] The decision to permit hot pursuit of the enemy across the Indonesian border was timely, as the number and frequency of incursions and attacks was escalating further. Company-sized battles occurred at "Track 6" on March 7, 1964, and against 240 raiders in the Kling Klang Range of hills a few days later: the latter involved artillery, mortars and armored car fire,

helicopters firing air-to-ground missiles, and a full infantry company assault, and showed that the Indonesians were ingressing in sizable numbers.[153] Another incursion of 240 IBTs occurred in the Jambu area in April with 50 continuing into Sarawak—a rolling battle in the jungle that lasted for five weeks and saw 17 guerrillas killed and 7 captured, with the rest fleeing back across the border. There was then a short lull during talks in Tokyo in June 1964, but then larger attacks predominantly composed of Indonesian regular troops began in earnest. One at Rasau in Sarawak, that took place 24 hours after the talks broke down, killed five Gurkhas and wounded five more, and showed the Indonesian forces had significant tactical skill. In July, no less than 34 attacks took place.[154] Walker recognized that the Indonesians were now attacking in numbers, that the enemy was now determined regulars, often dug in and using medium and heavy weapons. He likened it to World War II fighting in Burma against the Japanese.[155] This was tough fighting. He quickly saw that the conflict required a change in British tactics. The lesson is that commanders and their staffs must seek to recognize when the enemy has changed tactics and be prepared to respond rapidly to regain the initiative.

The conflict widened further when from July 1964 raiding parties infiltrated by sea into West Malaysia. The parties tried to conduct attacks on installations in Singapore and West Malaysia.[156] They were unsuccessful, but acts of sabotage continued throughout Confrontation. An Indonesian radio station had been set up to spread propaganda and disinformation, which resulted in race riots in Singapore in July and September. In August 1964, a force of 97 men was landed on three beaches in West Malaysia. The majority were caught or scattered, and their equipment captured by Malaysian troops. Indonesian fast patrol boats also clashed with a Malaysian patrol craft. When the Indonesians stated that the Sunda Straits between Java and Sumatra were closed for a month for an exercise, a RN task force built around the aircraft carrier HMS *Victorious* was sent to the area.[157] This worried Indonesia sufficiently that Jakarta announced that the Straits were reopened. A number of plans were drawn up to conduct air and/or sea attacks against a range of Indonesian targets should the conflict escalate to all-out war and airfields in Singapore and Malaysia received antiaircraft artillery to protect them. Notwithstanding these preparations, on the night of September 1, 1964, four Indonesian C-130 aircraft were tasked to drop paratroops in West Malaysia.[158] One aircraft was unserviceable, and a second aircraft disappeared en route. The remaining two aircraft, in a storm, dropped 96 paratroops at Labis in Johor region. The paratroops and their equipment were scattered widely in the drops, many groups not linking up with others. Malaysian and Gurkha troops searched for the paratroops. By the end of the month, most of the paratroops had been killed or captured. New Zealand troops, authorized by their government, were involved in the action for the first

time and captured two insurgents.[159] Penetration of Malaysian airspace by Indonesian aircraft caused a review of the air defense system in West Malaysia.[160] The attacks on West Malaysia caused a sea change in the political and military landscape. Australia and New Zealand pledged their troops to defend Malaysia if further attacks occurred. The United States, noting a vitriolic anti-American speech by Sukarno in August, the landings in West Malaysia and Indonesia's growing rapprochement with China, shifted its policy markedly toward the British and Australian line.[161] This dramatically shows again that consideration of the political effect of operations must be an essential feature of counterinsurgency planning.

The fighting in Borneo and the landings in West Malaysia nearly brought Indonesia and Malaysia to open conflict. Britain brought ships out of retirement and sent a second aircraft carrier group to the Far East.[162] The Royal Navy fleet in the region numbered 80 warships, including two aircraft carrier groups and a commando carrier group. It was the largest naval deployment since the Korean War and comprised a third of the fleet. Although there were no more parachute drops, incursions by sea into West Malaysia continued. The coast was watched by RN ships and Singaporean and Malaysian police coastal craft, and local and army personnel, and a warning system instigated to report any landings.[163] A landing by 52 infiltrators on October 29, 1964, was met by 28 Commonwealth Brigade, including the Australian and New Zealand Battalions. Australian artillery pounded the insurgents, and, within three weeks, all the infiltrators had been killed or captured. Many other attempts to land smaller groups continued, and clashes occurred at sea on several occasions. On March 31, 1965, the total number of attempted landings in West Malaysia stood at 41, with 102 Indonesians killed and 309 captured.[164] Attacks with rockets and guns by Hunter and Canberra aircraft were used on some occasions, and these often caused the insurgents to surrender immediately or to move rapidly.[165] Helicopters based in Singapore dropped troops to surround, block, and attack the insurgents, and the sound of the helicopters constantly around them demoralized the groups and persuaded many of them to give themselves up.[166] The lesson is that air power, when used appropriately in counterinsurgency operations, can be a battle winner.

In August 1964, the government decided that the authority given for "hot pursuit" across the border was to be extended to permit British troops to cross the border to attack Indonesian home bases.[167] The authority was granted in the knowledge that the border was ill-defined, so incursions were deniable. The code name for the policy was Operation *Claret*. Walker had to authorize every *Claret* operation, and only experienced troops could take part. Every operation had to be planned and executed with maximum security, the men sworn to secrecy with no discussion of

the operation at all. The depth of border crossing was limited initially to 3,000 yards, and attacks must be made to thwart anticipated enemy action, not for revenge or to inflict large numbers of casualties on the enemy. They were to be "hit-and-run" raids, to keep the enemy off balance, and to ensure that there was no sanctuary or relaxation for him in his home territory. Every operation had to be rehearsed for at least two weeks using models of the terrain and enemy facilities in the target area built up by using sand (and thus known as "sand tables"), and no soldier taking part was to be captured by the enemy, alive or dead. The depth of penetration was selected because it was within artillery support range. There had to be meticulous planning for each operation, for which approval was then given by the prime minister's office. In addition, Royal Marine Special Boat Section (SBS) personnel were authorized to make small-scale amphibious raids on either flank on the coast.[168] There was no announcement of the policy as it was felt it might do harm to Britain's reputation, but it was a courageous decision by a government facing a general election. Although the Conservative Party lost the election to the Labour Party, the incoming secretary of state for defense, Dennis Healey, endorsed the policy soon after he took up his post.[169] The lessons must be that politicians need to be given the facts on which to base key decisions and counterinsurgency campaigns are greatly assisted by continuity of political support.

Operation *Claret* changed the whole nature of the campaign in Borneo for the Commonwealth forces. Although defensive tactics were proving immensely successful, now they were not on the defensive the whole time but could hit the enemy offensively too. Attacks by insurgents into East Malaysia were disrupted and thwarted and casualties inflicted at an early stage. In time, the distance across the border was increased to 20,000 yards for some operations. But *Claret* operations did have their drawbacks.[170] The cross-border operations exacted a great mental and physical toll on the troops concerned and on their commanders. Courage and skill were required to overcome the tensions and issues of operating behind enemy lines. Perhaps the main concern of all officers was the problem of getting their own casualties back to Sarawak or Sabah without using helicopters. No border crossing by aircraft was permitted except in dire emergency, though on rare occasions Walker did allow a helicopter to cross the border to pick up casualties. Most of the time, casualties and bodies had to be physically carried back across the border. Amelioration measures were taken: medical orderlies accompanied patrols, soldiers were taught advanced first aid, and some SAS men were trained in basic surgery.[171] However, it was fortunate that casualty rates remained low on *Claret* operations. But *Claret* proved to be one of the keys to winning the campaign, as the enemy no longer had sanctuary in his own country, a circumstance that undermined his confidence and raised the morale of

the defenders significantly. Between May 1964 and January 1965, when the cross-border operations were permitted to 3,000 yards, the security forces had 13 contacts resulting in 37 Indonesians killed and 27 wounded for the loss of 2 dead and 8 wounded. Between January 1965 and May 1966, when the depth was 10,000 yards, there were 125 contacts, which inflicted 502 dead and 166 wounded on the enemy for 18 dead and 39 wounded among the Security Forces. The lesson once again is that offensive action, guided by excellent intelligence, is an essential part of counterinsurgency operations.

In early 1965, Sukarno again sought to increase attacks on Malaysia and the Indonesian forces in Borneo once again increased in size. Walker asked for further reinforcements, and two more battalions were dispatched from the United Kingdom, together with a fourth squadron of Whirlwind helicopters.[172] A fourth brigade HQ was formed to control the 12 battalions. Later in the year, a 13th battalion was sent to Borneo,[173] and RN Wessex Mk1s were replaced by the much more powerful Mk5.[174] Westland Sioux helicopters also arrived for command and control and liaison duties.[175] Walker claimed that he had insufficient helicopters for the task,[176] though a recent study challenges that assertion.[177] The lesson about the essential nature of helicopters during counterinsurgency campaigns is underlined.

SINGAPORE WITHDRAWS FROM MALAYSIA

By August 1965, there were severe ideological differences between Rahman and Lee Kuan Yew, the prime minister of Singapore, based on Chinese concern about the dominant position of the Malays in politics and the demand that Malay should be the national language.[178] Consequently, Singapore withdrew from the federation and decided to stand alone as a nation, but retaining Commonwealth ties. This might have resulted in the breakup of Malaysia and severe difficulties for Britain, as in time British forces would have had to leave the island; but by this time, Indonesia was in trouble economically and was unable to take advantage of the situation.[179] Singapore's withdrawal from Malaysia on August 10, 1965, might have given the United Kingdom the perfect opportunity to withdraw from the AMDA—but clearly this could only have been after Confrontation had been concluded successfully.[180]

Commonwealth troops were gaining the upper hand in Borneo, and Indonesian raids were now largely hit-and-run affairs, or artillery and mortar attacks, on targets just across the border. Indonesian troops in some areas withdrew more than 10,000 yards from the border; *Claret* operations could not attack them, but it showed the success of British tactics.[181] Clashes continued, but most of these were during *Claret* attacks

across the border. During one of these, Lance-Corporal Rambahadur Limbu was awarded the only Victoria Cross on Confrontation, but the report was carefully worded to disguise the fact that the action took place in Kalimantan.

THE END OF CONFRONTATION

Political tensions were mounting in Indonesia, caused by accelerating inflation and its resulting civil unrest, together with disquiet among the anticommunists over increasing PKI influence.[182] Insurgent attacks began to wane as the Indonesian army was distracted by dealing with internal problems.[183] Several temporary suspensions of *Claret* operations occurred as a result. In September 1965, Sukarno sought to break the power of the army and the PKI attempted a major coup on October 1, 1966, against the military.[184] Although some generals were killed and imprisoned, others survived and remained free, notably General Suharto, a dynamic, respected officer who had largely orchestrated insurgent training and planning. He and his surviving colleagues conducted a purge of the PKI, and the army killed and imprisoned thousands of them. Sukarno had lost all support. Consequently, in March 1965, Suharto stripped Sukarno of his powers and took over as president. Although there were still occasional insurgent forays into Malaysia, the impetus had gone and secret talks began to end Confrontation.[185] A peace treaty recognizing Malaysia was signed on August 11, 1966, in Bangkok, officially ending the conflict.[186] Within two weeks, the bulk of British forces were withdrawn from Borneo, with a few detachments left behind to assist Malaysian troops counter raids by outlaw gangs, which were pursued by both sides.[187] These forays were soon brought to an end.

During Confrontation, Commonwealth losses amounted to 114 killed and 180 wounded. The Indonesians officially admitted a loss of 600 men killed, but the total was almost certainly higher as a result of British cross-border operations, which officially never took place.[188] It was a classic counterinsurgency campaign fought in difficult conditions with limited resources, and it deserves close study. The men who fought it deserve huge respect. Subsequently, Dennis Healey paid this well-deserved tribute to the armed forces in Parliament:

> When the House thinks of the tragedy that could have fallen on a whole corner of a continent if we had not been able to hold the situation and bring it to a successful termination, it will appreciate that in the history books [concluding Confrontation successfully] will be recorded as one of the most efficient uses of military force in the history of the world.[189]

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AAA: Anti-Aircraft Artillery

AAC: Army Air Corps

ADIZ: Air Defense Identification Zone

AMDA: Anglo-Malayan (later Malaysian) Defence Agreement

CBF: Commander British Forces

CCO: Clandestine Communist Organisation

C-in-C: Commander in Chief

C-in-C FE: Commander in Chief Far East

CO: Commanding Officer

COS: Chief of Staff/Chiefs of Staff

CTs: Communist Terrorists

DSO: Distinguished Service Order

FOB: Forward Operating Base

GNP: Gross National Product

GOC: General Officer Commanding

GOC-in-C: General Officer Commanding in Chief

HMS: Her Majesty's Ship

HQ: Headquarters

HQ FEAF: Headquarters Far East Air Force

HQ FELF: Headquarters Far East Land Forces

IBTs: Indonesian Border Terrorists

IMF: International Monetary Fund

JIC: Joint Intelligence Committee

KOGA: *Kommando* Siaga (Vigilance of Alert Command, sometimes referred to as Crush Malaysia Border Area Command)

***Konfrontasi*:** Confrontation (Indonesian)

NAS: Naval Air Squadron

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

***Neokim*:** Neo-Colonialism (Indonesian)

ORB: Operational Record Book

PKI: *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Indonesian Communist Party)

QRF: Quick Reaction Force

R&R: Rest and Recuperation

RAF: Royal Air Force

RAN: Royal Australian Navy

RM: Royal Marines

RN: Royal Navy

RNZN: Royal New Zealand Navy

SAS: Special Air Service

SBS: Special Boat Section (of the Royal Marines)

SEATO: Southeast Asia Treaty Organization

SRB: Squadron Record Book

TNKU: *Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara* (North Kalimantan National Army)

UK: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Britain)

UN: United Nations

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CHAPTER 6

The British in South Arabia, 1963–67: A Tale of Two Insurgencies

Aaron Edwards

> Even the friendliest Arabs seemed to harbour the suspicion that, as a race, we were congenitally hypocritical.[1]

INTRODUCTION

On November 29, 1967, the last British soldiers left Aden after 128 years of unbroken colonial rule. The withdrawal from Britain's only Middle Eastern outpost left a power vacuum that was quickly filled by the National Liberation Front (NLF), the principal armed opponent of the British-backed Federation of South Arabia. Between 1963 and 1967, some 200 British troops and British civilians were killed and thousands injured, which would pale into insignificance when set against those Arabs who died, were wounded, or were exiled from the country in the wake of Britain's evacuation. Indeed, we may never know the number of Arabs affected by the NLF's seizure of power because no accurate official record was ever kept and no official history of Britain's Aden adventure has ever been written.[2] The episode remains one of the last forgotten battles of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century.[3]

This chapter gives an overview of British military operations in South Arabia in the context of the four-year 'armed struggle' launched by the NLF in 1963. Drawing on official records, private papers, and eyewitness testimonies, it analyzes how colonial rule was enforced and protected, arguing that Britain never applied a consistent counterinsurgency

doctrine in either its fight against upcountry tribesmen or urban-based terrorists. Instead, the chapter makes the case that the British merely relied on an ineffectual policy of coercion that failed to generate the intelligence "product" necessary to combat an insurgency marked by its tenacity and sophistication. In exposing Britain's mishandling of the insurgencies ranging against it, the chapter also looks at the social basis of dissent, which provided a permissible environment in which terrorism and insurgency thrived. To be sure, anticolonial unrest and violence was sustained over time in the Aden urban area by the proletarian muscle offered by the Aden Trade Union Congress (ATUC) and by the anticolonialist Movement of Arab Nationalism (MAN) in its lobbying of tribal leaders in the hinterland of the Western and Eastern Protectorates,[4] an effort initially backed by an influx of resources (cash, training, weapons, and explosives) provided by the Egyptian Intelligence Service (EIS).[5] To take an accurate reading of the situation, one must, therefore, factor in the engagement between the insurgents and the security forces.

OPERATION *NUTCRACKER* AND THE RADFAN DISSIDENTS

The Aden insurgency caught the British by complete surprise. The security machinery they had built up since Aden became a Crown colony in 1937, which was based on what one local political officer has called the "three Bs—bribery, bombing, and bluff."[6] This threefold strategy was meant to protect the port and surrounding military bases from the tribal lawlessness that bedeviled the expansive 112,000 mile square interior of South Arabia (a landmass bigger than England, Scotland, and Wales combined), which stretched from the border with the Imamate Kingdom of Yemen in the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula, hugged the southern border of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (known as the Rub' al Khali or "Empty Quarter"), and met with the border with Muscat and Oman in the east.

By 1959, the British had adjudicated in the creation of a Federation of South Arabia (encompassing the six tribal units of Lahej, Dhala, Yafa, Beihan, Upper Aulaqi Sheikhdom, and Fadhli) and by 1962 negotiations were completed in London that would see the member states eventually expand to 12. Significantly, the intent was to merge Aden colony with the other states and house its government in the purpose-built city of al-Ittihad, midway between Little Aden and Aden proper, close to its busy international seaport. The long-term intention was to safeguard British commercial and security interests in the region despite the winds of decolonization sweeping through Africa, South Asia, and the Far East.

In Lahej State, in the Western Aden Protectorate, the problem of unpacified tribalism meant that parts of the hinterland remained fertile ground

for the rejection of British imperialist designs, especially among the sons of those few rulers who presided like feudal lords over the poorest and most destitute peoples in the whole of South Arabia. Not much had changed in these places for generations. The scenes that greeted English writer Evelyn Waugh in the early 1930s were typical of a pattern of life uninterrupted by the onset of modernity and industrial development. Observing a tribal gathering, Waugh felt he was witnessing tribesmen living "a life of almost squalid simplicity," who talked little to one another and suffered from interminable shyness and awkwardness. "Their embarrassment," he said, gave them a "pop-eyed look, quite unlike the keen, hawk faces of cinema sheiks."[7] But this was a misrepresentation of the natural order upon which tribalism rested. High commissioner for Aden and South Arabia, Sir Kennedy Trevaskis, summed it up well: "Jealous and suspicious of their neighbors and seeing no further than the perimeters of their own parochial interests, rulers, Dolas, and tribes had clung to the moated security of their hearths and homes, fearful of any lowering of drawbridges."[8] This had real repercussions for Britain's "Forward Policy"[9] because, as Trevaskis observed, somewhat sardonically, there was "the curious fact that the bulk of Aden's population originates from the Yemen and has no closer links with the South Arabian countryside than an Irish laborer in Glasgow is likely to have with the highlands of Scotland."[10]

In late 1963, British authorities moved to put an end to the taxing of goods passing through the rugged mountains of Radfan in the northwest of the Western Aden Protectorate. For centuries, tribesmen had imposed their own locally based levies on goods being brought up along the Dhala Road from Aden in the south to Yemen and Saudi Arabia in the north and west. The custom of collecting local taxes was an integral component of tribal life in the area. However, by October 1963, the local political officer, Godfrey Meynell, acting on the authority of the Federation of South Arabia and the local Radfani ruler, Sheikh Abdullah Abdhali, moved to extend the writ of the central Federal Supreme Council and end subtribal taxation.[11]

As a mark of the Federation's determination to break the power of the tribes, Meynell was authorized to bring forward a battalion of the Federal Regular Army (FRA) under the command of Aqid (Colonel) Haider Saleh al-Habili. On October 14, acting on intelligence of arms being smuggled across the border from Yemen, Meynell (as the senior federation representative) ordered the reluctant Arab officer to return fire in a skirmish with a small group of dissident tribesmen, who were soon subjected to the full weight of British-backed federal combat power. In the resulting firefight, a tribal leader was killed, an action that signaled the opening salvo of the NLF's liberation struggle.[12] Although they lost the battle on that day, the NLF was by no means beaten and quickly began to graft its

EIS-trained cadres onto existing tribal structures in a way that would continue to cause the federation trouble on the main Dhala Road.

Following an attempted assassination bid on Trevaskis in December 1963, senior military officers in FRA HQ at Seedaseer Lines in Little Aden were ordered to plan for a major military mission. Operation *Nutcracker* was duly launched in January 1964 and initially consisted of three battalions of FRA, supported by one troop of 16/5 Lancers (with Centurion tanks), J Battery, 3rd Royal Horse Artillery, six Royal Navy helicopters from HMS *Centaur*, and RAF Hawker Hunter and Shackleton aircraft based at Khormaksar.[13] The dissident tribesmen were few in number (some intelligence placed them at a total strength of 12), but within weeks the number had swelled to several hundred. Britain now faced three distinct but overlapping security challenges—large-scale industrial unrest and civil disobedience in Aden, cross-border hostility from the Egyptian-backed Yemen Arab Republic, and an implacable rural-based insurgency led by trained NLF fighters. While the federation forces were largely successful in clearing the dissident tribesmen from the Dhala Road and securing favorable terms from some sections of the Radfani confederacy, they could not bring everyone to terms. Within weeks of the end of Operation *Nutcracker*, dissident tribesmen had returned to their default position of harassing convoys and extracting taxes in the Rabwa Pass as well as destroying the road. Their numbers had now swollen to 500 and included "a hard core of some 200 Egyptian-trained guerrillas."[14] Something had to be done, and quickly.

Sir Kennedy Trevaskis and the Middle East commander in chief Lieutenant General Charles Harington had taken different positions on how to the deal with the problem of attacks on the Dhala Road. The divergence in opinion over how Operation *Nutcracker* would achieve its objective of demonstrating British determination to control what happened within the federation was recorded by Julian Paget who felt that the options open to the Aden authorities were limited to three courses of action. He outlined these as (a) the enforcement of Federali rule by the imposition of airpower, (b) the extension of developmental projects like school and well-building, and (c) a major ground operation against dissident tribesmen. With "air action" ruled out because of the unfavorable international climate and "civil action" unreliable in winning short-term gains, it was decided that "military action" was the only real option open to the Federalis.[15] When it became evident after the "success" of Operation *Nutcracker* that a further penetration of the Radfani's tribal heartland was required to finish the job, the task fell to regular British military units to augment seasoned battalions of FRA troops already operating in the area.

45 Commando Royal Marines was perhaps the most experienced unit to have deployed to Aden and the Protectorate. In unbroken service in

the region between 1960 and 1967, they had spent considerable time exercising in the harsh climate and inhospitable terrain of the Radfan Mountains. Masters of mountain warfare, 45 Commando also maintained the flexibility to launch other forms of contingency operation. By maintaining a fleet of Commando helicopter ships and aircraft carriers off the Arabian coast, Britain's Royal Marines could mount cliff assaults, long-range patrols, and heliborne assaults, pioneering the technique before even the Americans. Operating from HMS *Centaur* stationed in Aden harbor on June 22, 1963, for example, they were quickly tasked with deploying into Aden to conduct routine Internal Security (IS) drills in the towns of Crater, Ma'ala, and Sheikh Othman.[16]

It was due mainly to their operational dexterity that 45 Commando was chosen for the follow-up mission to Operation *Nutcracker*. Together with 1 East Anglian Regiment, they were tasked with undertaking a punitive operation "to end the operations of dissidents in the defined area."[17] The operations were designed to augment the overarching political objective of establishing the authority of the fledgling federation and would last from mid-April until the end of June. The Radfan Force (or RADFORCE for short) spent much of their time advancing to contact across harsh terrain in a combined arms operation designed to clear and hold ground seized by dissidents. With the introduction of 39 (Airportable) Brigade from Lisburn in Northern Ireland in May, the temporary RADFORCE mission was turned into what one staff officer called "a Rolls Royce of an operation."[18] By the end of May—and with the introduction of another regular battalion, 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, into the South Arabian theatre—the British had succeeded in driving the rebels off the Dhala Road after a final battle in the Wadi Dubshan.

British military operations in the first half of 1964 paved the way for the opening of roundtable political talks in London designed to settle the future of South Arabia. As minister of defense, Peter Thorneycroft was triumphantly to inform Parliament in the summer of 1964:

> For the foreseeable future Aden will be necessary to our strategy, and our absence from it would both render us unable to discharge our direct obligations to our friends, and would set in train events harmful to the cause of peace. It is therefore our purpose and intention to stay there, and our military plans, dispositions and actions will be shaped to this end.[19]

The British Conservative government, therefore, sought to build up the federation as a vehicle by which it could transition South Arabia toward independence. However, given that British national interests were at stake, it was important for any future settlement to protect Britain's key commercial arteries in the Arabian Peninsula, which meant oil exploitation and the vital trade route through the Suez Canal. This was easier said

than done. Up until that point, the principal opposition to continuing British interests came from the organized Labour movement as represented by the most heavily unionized workforce in the Middle East.[20]

LABOUR MUSCLE AND THE GROWTH OF URBAN TERRORISM IN ADEN

Aden was first occupied by the British in 1839. Then its population stood at only 500, but with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, it would explode to 44,000 by the end of the century. By 1931, it had grown to 51,500, reaching 225,000 in 1963.[21] Together with the Western and Eastern Protectorates, the total population of South Arabia stood at just over 1 million. With the quadrupling in Aden's population came an increase in its importance to British imperial strategy. Yet, it was an uneven growth, as the port became shielded from the tribalism that ruled supreme in the interior. This irregular development, recorded political scientist Fred Halliday, "later became the determinant factor in the area's politics."[22] Indeed, as Ottoman influence spread across North Yemen and threatened to penetrate the hinterland, the British entered into treaties with the tribal rulers. As Halliday later noted, "These treaties fossilized tribal divisions and froze relations within the tribes by strengthening the sheikhs with recognition and subsidies."[23]

As a sign of British intentions to retain its foothold in the Arabian Peninsula, the political and military hierarchy in London authorized the transfer of headquarters of Middle East Command (MEC) from Cyprus to Aden in 1960, even going as far as to invest £20 million in the development of the base to house over 25,000 British soldiers and their dependents in brand new accommodation overlooking the sun-kissed beaches of Steamer Point.[24] Nonetheless, the dreamy tranquility of Aden as a backwater port was soon to be shattered forever once the merger between Aden and the hinterland completed in January 1963. Huge demonstrations in Aden brought thousands of disenfranchised migrant workers (mainly immigrants from North Yemen and Somalia) out onto the streets to protest at the fact that they were to be ruled by unelected sultans, sheikhs, and emirs who prevented them from reaching the entitlements of full citizenship. Radical anticolonialism backed by the trade unions under the stewardship of the young, middle-class firebrand Abdullah al-Asnag would lead to several large strikes throughout the remainder of the year, which would soon be joined with armed insurrection in the autumn.

North Yemenis lived predominantly in Crater and Sheikh Othman. They were mainly employed as dock workers or in the construction industry. Somalis lived in shanty towns on the slopes of Crater—one of

the most infamous being the "Kutcha Huts"—and formed a poor proletariat of unskilled workers earning a living principally through casual labor. A small number of Jews (about 7,300) tended to work in commerce, though most had left in the wake of serious civil disturbances in 1947–48 at a time when conflagration had spread across the Middle East due to turbulence generated by the unanswered Palestine question. Coal bunkering became big business. A total of 2.5 percent of Aden's GDP was generated through this activity, while the oil refinery accounted for 9 percent. Only local government employment rivaled it at 10 percent of GDP. Because of the passing trade from passenger ships, a number of duty-free shops sprang up around the piers of Tawahi and Steamer Point. Some 13 percent of GDP could be tied to wholesale and retail. The service industry boomed, with insurance firms and banks dominating at 7 percent. Apart from the oil refinery run by BP (British Petroleum), construction accounted for 7 percent of GDP, which equated to 50 percent of all industrial jobs.[25]

The formation of the ATUC in 1958, under the stewardship of the indefatigable Abdullah al-Asnag, ushered in a range of possibilities for politicizing Aden's multiplicity of competing working class interests. Under al-Asnag, the ATUC had led a mass strike in 1959 to protest against the formation of the federation (originally encompassing six states). It was the first of its kind in Aden and was aided and abetted by the lack of appetite for a radical alternative to be provided by the Islamic tradition. Many of the tribal traditions dated back to pre-Islamic times; so powerful were they that the NLF—by 1966 representing a fusion of a rural-based tribalism and a noxious form of urban Marxism—became ruthless in its attempts to destroy its hold on life in Southeast Arabia once the British departed in 1967.

Al-Asnag and the ATUC had strong links with the more militant Front for the Liberation of South Yemen (FLOSY), which found concerted political expression in the form of the Peoples' Socialist Party (PSP). FLOSY was headed by al-Asnag and the former chief secretary in Aden, Abdul Mackawee. Tired and frustrated that their nonviolent opposition to British-backed federal authority was getting them nowhere, al-Asnag's rhetoric became more and more militant. Though bombastic, he was an intelligent individual who got on well with High Commissioner Kennedy Trevaskis. After a failed assassination bid in December 1963, the prospects for a peaceful future for Aden looked distinctly unappealing to the radicals. Many of those caught up in the attack—including tribal leaders—resorted to settling disputes in the only way they knew how: through the medium of violence. It was in this ancient tradition of an eye for an eye that members of the Fadhli tribe carried out an assassination bid on the cousin of Abdullah al-Asnag, one of the PSP's most trusted lieutenants.

Unsatisfied by the extraction of tribal justice, the chief of the Fadhli tribe, Sultan Ahmed al-Fadhli, lost no time in demanding further concessions from the British. "If Britain refuses us independence," he ranted, "it will lose its friendship with this area. It will also be a crime against the people."[26] The British discounted this as "just another piece of Fadhli nonsense and irresponsibility that can do little harm or little good to anyone." Indeed, the deputy high commissioner, Tom Oates, went so far as to telegraph Trevaskis in London with news that Sharif Husain was of the opinion that Ahmed al-Fadhli was being bribed by Nasser.[27] With few options open to him, Trevaskis bowed to the demands of the other federal rulers for a more determined security response to counter the growing instability provoked by the ATUC. Acting on the basis of emergency legislation, Trevaskis moved to issue a formal decree for the rounding up of the PSP's key activists. The security forces promptly rounded up 50 ATUC and PSP activists and dispatched them to prisons outside Aden State.

Not long afterward, allegations of ill treatment of the detainees began to surface. Led by al-Asnag's mother, Khadaji, a small delegation of women visited Ras Morbut, by now the principal interrogation center where the detainees were held, to find conditions were as bad as they had been expecting. As they promptly informed the Aden Chronicle newspaper: "Interrogation, we are told, continues nonstop, four hours at a time. A detainee is ordered to stand upright, for the full length of the interrogation. They are denied access to legal counsel. Speaking in the House of Lords, Lord Devonshire had promised the detainees that they would see their lawyers."[28] The delegation found that the detainees were alleging that they had been subjected to stress positions and psychological torture; as Mrs al-Asnag told the *Aden Chronicle*: "These boys have been held for political offences, we presume. We, therefore, demand that they should be treated as political detainees and not as criminals condemned and convicted before trial."[29] In a letter which appeared in the same issue of the *Aden Chronicle*, Mrs U. A. Rahman, an English-born wife of one of the detainees complained: "What advantage [do] the authorities think they will gain from this emergency?" She laid responsibility at Britain's door: "Aden is a British Colony, not a Federal State and [as] such the British are responsible. It is 36 days since my husband [has been] away from me. How much longer do they intend to hold him [?] This is all I want to know."[30]

The truth was that Trevaskis had to walk a fine line between pressure from tribal rulers in South Arabia (who had been aggrieved by the assassination bid) and the Tory grandees in London, many of whom seemed completely guided by the prospect of an international furor over allegations of mistreatment of detainees, which would likely follow in the wake of a strong security response. In secret correspondence with London, it soon became clear that the high commissioner was to be guided by

criticism at Westminster on the issue. As he revealed in a communiqué to the Colonial Office:

> You indicate that we should be guided in this matter by the strength of Parliamentary criticism and that in the absence of positive proof the detainees should be released. If we had positive proof the detainees would of course be taken to court, and indeed if detention were only considered justifiable, where positive proof was available, emergency powers would be meaningless.[31]

For the moment, the authorities in Aden would have to tread a very fine line and one that would increasingly permit the NLF to take advantage of the lackluster approach by Government House and the Federal Council in Aden.

The NLF was originally formed by key individuals from the South who had crossed into the YAR after the revolution of September 1962, but did not officially call a conference to agree its initial aims until March 1963, when it met in Sana'a.[32] To enable practical operational control over its subversion in South Arabia, the NLF's headquarters was situated in Yemen's second city, Taiz'z, and brought together a mixture of tribal leaders, army officers, Yemeni, and Adeni port workers and intellectuals. It even had a vibrant women's section, numbering several hundred, which played a support role in the urban areas and an active role in the fighting up country.[33] Although eager to liberate South Arabia from colonialism, the NLF stressed "the primacy of national over social or class elements,"[34] preferring to sidestep the Marxist fundamentals of class struggle, atheism, and economic determinism for the sanguinity of armed revolution. Unfortunately, few politicians in London were comfortable with the idea of exposing Nasser's intrigue for fear of making matters worse.[35] By August 1964, the NLF had resolved to launch a major campaign of terrorism in Aden, beginning with grenade attacks on British service personnel and the assassination of Arab Special Branch officers. It was this decision that would have profound effects on the ability of the Aden government to respond to terrorism.

FIGHTING BLIND: THE BRITISH RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

It is hard to conceive that British intelligence had little understanding of the challenge posed by the NLF until as late as 1965, when the Aden Intelligence Centre was revamped and reorganized by Brigadier Anthony Cowper. However, it is not at all surprising that the tensions between Trevaskis and Greenwood would be reflected in the structural relations between the various government departments responsible for security in Aden. Evidence from the official papers suggests that internal disagreement between the Colonial Office, MoD, and federal government over

who should ultimately lead the fight against the NLF delayed Cowper's arrival until mid-1965. Cowper immediately ordered a radical shakeup of Aden's intelligence infrastructure, which paved the way for the appointment of a new head of Special Branch a year later. John Prendergast's arrival in 1966 signaled the return to Britain's preferred constitutional position of a civilian law enforcement lead in combating terrorism in its internal security campaigns. Prendergast was an old-hand colonial policeman who had seen Special Branch service in Palestine, Kenya, Cyprus, and Hong Kong.[36]

The lack of a concerted law enforcement response to the problem of terrorism in Aden up until this point had placed considerable pressure on MEC, which was already responsible for a patch that extended from Kenya in the southwest to Kuwait in the northwest. The MEC was commanded by a three-star military officer (of lieutenant general, admiral, or air marshal rank) who was assisted by a general officer commanding (GOC), flag officer, Middle East, and air officer commanding, Air Forces Middle East, all of whom (as two-star officers) worked to a joint command structure and oversaw the day-to-day running of operations across the Middle East. In Aden, the GOC had responsibility "for the operational efficiency and training of their forces and for the detailed conduct of operations" to maintain the security of the Aden base, subject to overall control by the commander in chief MEC. Policy advice on IS matters within Aden came directly from the Aden Security Policy Committee, which included the commander in chief and high commissioner as members.[37] Aden Brigade, the resident garrison force, was regarded as something of a sleepy backwater in military terms and was typically commanded by a brigadier close to retirement.

Under the new high commissioner, Sir Richard Turnbull, one of the principal means of fighting the insurgents was through a systematic process of "deep interrogation." This was a highly controversial set of techniques readily applied to insurgent suspects who were unlucky enough to find themselves subjected to the attention of a secret army of Army and Special Branch personnel based at the Fort Morbut Interrogation Centre in Steamer Point. A "grim" two-storey building that also housed a military guard, Fort Morbut, was regarded as the "nerve centre" of counterterrorist operations in Aden. However, it soon gained a reputation for unsavory methods, so much so that Amnesty International and the International Committee of the Red Cross commissioned their own fact-finding missions into what exactly went on inside Fort Morbut when allegations broke of detainees being subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment.[38] While the British foreign secretary, George Brown, bowed to pressure and ordered his own internal investigation into the allegations, it was not enough to placate international human rights groups that quickly dismissed the inquiry as a whitewash.

One soldier who served at the Interrogation Centre was Corporal George Lennox, who later described what he saw in vivid detail. It was mid-afternoon and he was going about his daily work routine when he saw Special Branch officers arrive at Fort Morbut with four suspects in tow, all of whom had been arrested on suspicion of murdering two RAF corporals on the Ma'ala Straight. Lennox claimed he heard screams and howling coming from the holding cells where the detainees had been taken. It was something, he claimed, would become a daily occurrence, when on at least one occasion he heard a single shot ring out across the compound when an interrogator allegedly pulled his gun on a detainee. Lennox made further allegations:

> Through the Guard Room window I watched three soldiers from a famous Infantry Regiment in Yorkshire, drag out an Adeni detainee into the exercise yard. There was blood coming from the man's mouth and he was dressed in a loin cloth round his waist. The three soldiers, standing about five yards apart, began, in turn, to hit the Adeni. The first soldier was using a five foot long broom handle and beating the man about the head and prodding him in his midriff and genital[s]. He was then passed to the second soldier who hit him with a tin mug, commonly used by the Infantry. The third used his fist. The unfortunate wretch feel unconscious twice. He was revived with a fire hose only to be beaten again. This was the only act of brutality I witnessed but you can be assured many more took place. The fact that the sickening screaming occurred usually prior [to] or immediately after the arrival and departure of the intelligence and interrogation officers makes me convinced of the validity of the reports made by the soldiers themselves and Amnesty International.[39]

Although he had left Aden for a posting in Germany in February 1966, Lennox was promptly arrested when his allegations were drawn to the attention of the MoD by the editor of *The Sunday Times*.

Curiously, it seems that some journalists gave more weight to his allegations than perhaps they ought to have. The MoD ordered the GOC to carry out an investigation into the allegations, which were subsequently disputed.[40] In a letter to the editor of *The Sunday Times*, the MoD said:

> Perhaps the most curious part of the corporal's letter is his account of an incident in the exercise yard of the interrogation centre, which he says he observed through the guardroom window. In fact the guardroom was outside the high wall of the centre and it would have been impossible to see into the yard. This was confirmed by all witnesses and was physically checked during the inquiry. In spite of the graphic detail given by Corporal Lennox this part of his story must be untrue.

Despite Lennox's recollection of bloodcurdling screams, none of the witnesses interviewed by the MoD heard noise from the detainees at any time. Those soldiers who served alongside Corporal Lennox also reported

that he made no mention or report of anything untoward at the time. The orderly officers on five of the days concerned confirmed that they received no reports of unusual incidents.

Following a thorough investigation, the MoD quietly rebuked Lennox's allegations. One official, R. M. Hastie-Smith, relayed the quandary facing the MoD to Denis Healey personally: "I am afraid that it will generally be regarded as bearing out the Rastgeldi allegations." Summing up, Hastie-Smith felt that the army would "react strongly" to this report but doubted whether Healey would "wish to suggest to the foreign secretary that the report be either edited or suppressed in any way." The official did, nonetheless, check the matter with Brown's private secretary and was told: "Mr Brown regards this as a good report and is quite happy to publish it." Despite the furor caused by the allegations of brutality, the MoD was able to express "some doubt whether the Bowen recommendations could be implemented before the withdrawal from Aden in 1968 but the F.O. [Foreign Office] are unworried on this score."[41]

The government would soon breathe a further sign of relief when an MoD investigation found "no substance whatsoever of Corporal Lennox's allegations." As a result, *The Sunday Times* took the decision to press ahead with the publication of Lennox's letter. In an official minute to the minister for the army at the time, the senior officer responsible for the investigation, General Sir Ian Freeland, wrote:

> Any further publicity for the charges of brutality by Army interrogators is regrettable, simply because it makes more smoke for the people who say there is no smoke without fire. But in this particular case we have quite a good answer and if our reply were printed alongside the letter we need not come out of it too badly. In any event we cannot prevent publication and may put ourselves in a bad light if we try.[42]

They needn't have worried as the United Kingdom's mission at the United Nations moved to suppress the report until after the current round of discussions on Aden had concluded, thereby blocking the repeated attempts of British officials to support the work of the UN Committee that had visited Aden. The findings of the committee were seen as an essential rubberstamp to British withdrawal, despite history repeating itself from the Palestine debacle and the fact that Labour remained unsure to whom to actually hand over. These were difficult times for British troops, especially given the controversies stirred by allegations of inhumane treatment. At a time when Britain was under diplomatic pressure at the United Nations on other colonial issues, including Rhodesia and Gibraltar, South Arabia provided another, unwelcome headache. Healey also urged caution in relation to the allegations, giving the impression of a man who did not want to rock the boat for fear that any action by the

government "might in certain circumstances have repercussions that would prejudice our prospect of successfully disengaging ourselves from South Arabia and of leaving behind an organized state."[43]

On the whole, senior military commanders were unapologetic about the rigorous interrogation methods employed in Aden. They regarded them as necessary and unavoidable and, in lieu of a better alternative, the only way to blunt the threat posed by terrorism. For the GOC, Major General John Willoughby, terrorism was a "deliberate and calculated weapon" used indiscriminately on civilians and service personnel alike. "If it is to achieve anything," he emphasized, "the user must go the whole way. It is a murder game without scruples, without quarter, and at its most callous."[44] Playing to an audience at home who were tired of hearing of the murders and injuries being sustained by British troops, Willoughby pulled no punches in outlining his thinking for those who may have winced at the thought of applying such methods:

> You have to explain to Parliament why you felt it necessary to pass sentence of death on the gunman in the street. I am not absolutely convinced that rubbing everybody out on sight is the best answer, but it would certainly be worth while trying, would it not?[45]

These remarks echoed the coercive policy now firmly in train in Aden and were eventually to set the Labour government on a collision course with Turnbull once the international press attention became intolerable.

TOWARDS "W DAY"

The arrival of the 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, in May 1967 signaled the resolve of the British military hierarchy to continue with the deployment of frontline troops to ensure that the planned withdrawal went smoothly. 1 Para would take over from the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, whose tour had been marred by the deaths of several of its men. Elements of 1 Para had been in Aden before, with several officers and NCOs having soldiered during the Radfan campaign of 1964 and companies of each of the Parachute battalions stationed in the Gulf would rotate into Aden to practice their IS drills. Sheikh Othman was a tough nut to crack. Violence had been spiraling out of control since 1965, but with the breaking apart of the united Front, composed of FLOSY and the NLF, events took a dramatic turn for the worse as both groups fought to gain the upper hand on the dusty streets of Sheikh Othman.

On June 20, 1967, tribal dynamics reared their ugly head in the most powerful of ways. Soldiers returning from early morning practice on the rifle ranges next to Khormaksar airbase were massacred as they drove

past Champion Lines. Arab soldiers and police recruits had mutinied, killing nine soldiers and wounding the same number. It was a body blow for the British who had been focused on an orderly transition from British to Arab responsibility for security. Matters were to worsen when a recce patrol from the 1st Battalion, Royal Northumberland Fusiliers (accompanied by several troops of the incoming 1st Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) drove into an ambush in Crater town, which had been seized by a combination of NLF intrigue and Arab police indiscipline and disloyalty. Two British Land Rovers ferrying troops past the main armed police barracks were shot to pieces and engulfed in fire. All of the men on the patrol—with the exception of Fusilier John Storey—were massacred. There can be no doubt that paranoia played a huge role in the Arab mutiny but it has to be acknowledged that the British made matters worse by not having a very convincing grasp of the individualism inherent in Arab tribalism in this part of the Middle East. Moreover, the British had always held a patronizing suspicion of the Arab soldier, as FRA commander, Brigadier James Lunt, was to observe in his memoirs:

> His ceaseless struggle against the elements has conditioned the Arab tribesman to [the] idea of violence, and has made him a violent man. He can change in an instant from a rational being into a screaming lunatic, quite beside himself with rage as he pleads his cause or threatens his adversary. Tempers lie so close to the surface, and are so often exacerbated by the climate, that blows are struck without a second thought.[46]

The unpredictable tribal dynamics that had given rise to this unfortunate set of circumstances had a long gestation and their resurfacing should not have caught the British by complete surprise. That it did would prove an indictment on British complacency.

Part of the British plan for handing control of Aden over to the federation was to train and equip the FRA. However, tribal loyalties, corruption, and nepotism put paid to the strategy of Arabization. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Lawson, the British officer in charge of training Arab soldiers in Aden, experienced firsthand the propensity for his allies to act in collusion with Arab militants, when he was knocked to the ground and his life threatened after an assault on NLF fighters holed up in the Al Noor Mosque in the town of Sheikh Othman. The divided loyalties of those Arabs who, on the one hand, resented both the terrorism of the NLF and FLOSY but, on the other, saw the writing on the wall for the federation post-withdrawal, are examined in more detail here. Intelligence pointed to the increasing sophistication of attacks on high-value targets, including British military and police officers and federal government ministers. In one such attack, the Sultan of Lahej narrowly escaped death when his convoy was hit by rocket-propelled grenades. Intelligence was now

suggesting that members of the EIS had entered Aden and were preparing for "some spectacular sabotage or terrorist operation."[47]

The lack of any continuous media presence meant that the British public was spared the horrific images of young soldiers being shot, abducted, tortured, and mutilated by frenzied mobs. However, the truth of this small war could not be kept hidden from the families of servicemen and women who read with considerable concern the stories of firefights, bombs, and derring-do. In a letter to Foreign Secretary George Brown, the sister of one soldier serving in Aden made her views on what was going on crystal clear:

> Why do our troops have to stay in Aden until January, killing and being killed? It is senseless when they are leaving next year. Bring them out immediately. It makes my blood boil—this senseless slaughter of young men. I know what I'm talking about. My young brother is out there and it makes me weep to read his letters. Every time I hear news of more soldiers being killed and injured my heart lurches.[48]

Letters flooded into Downing Street. A civilian working in the Officers' Mess at RAF Khormaksar rounded on the prime minister. "I asked what we were doing about it and the answer I got, shocked me, 'nothing, there's not much point now.' 'Nothing.' It seems to be getting a habit, doesn't it," she fumed.[49] Even the shadow cabinet was not spared the wrath of the British public. A bank manager living in Crater vented his anger in the direction of Duncan Sandys:

> Yesterday's incredibly disgraceful show . . . Our soldiers' lives were needlessly lost through some half-witted order to go in with "maximum restraint"! And as they went in, magazines for their weapons still in their pockets only to be shot down like clay pigeons. Mark it well—magazines for their weapons still in their pockets. Ask the hospital where the dead and wounded (our service dead) were taken. Isn't it about time we had some muscle instead of blubber at the top? We don't want to hear Mr Brown's "dear Mr Nasser please can you stop throwing bombs in Aden" anymore. When, oh when, will reality tear the gouge from the eyes of the labourites.[50]

Although the trickle of letters proclaiming the senselessness of the slaughter continued, it served to redouble the politicians' efforts to pull the plug on Aden and to rush for the exit as quickly as possible. This meant that decisions became less and less strategic and more and more focused on cutting the knot, come what may. But for some soldiers deeply affected by the loss of their comrades there was a feeling of having to seek retribution and to ensure that Aden did not become another Dunkirk or Palestine. There was much riding on peaceful withdrawal, without bloodshed and, if possible, by formally handing over power to a new government.

However, by the end of June 1967, the British government was still hedging its bets on who that successor would be, opting to support the Federalis, but only "until something better came along." It was a dangerous position for the British government to adopt and would lead to a violent response from FLOSY and the NLF. The seizure of Crater was now entering its second week and British prestige and authority was in the doldrums. Something had to be done.

Crater was the central town in South Arabia. Set amidst the crater of a dormant volcano, it was largely urbanized. It had two routes in and out, which, in theory, made it easy to secure. However, the fusiliers, stationed in Waterloo cantonment for the first six months of 1967, opted not to occupy Crater but simply to mount checkpoints in and out of the town. This would pose significant problems toward the end of their tour, particularly when public disorder broke out on its streets. With the arrival of the Argylls in June 1967 in the wake of the Crater ambush, their commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Colin Mitchell, took the bold decision to reoccupy the town and station his troops in key positions across the high points overlooking the townscape. For several weeks after seizing Crater in a daring night-time operation on July 3–4, they would clamp down on insurgent activity and general lawlessness. Mitchell's policy of "tolerant toughness" worried his senior commanders and he was eventually ordered to "throttle back" so as to take the pressure off ordinary Adenis who were complaining about the constant harrying by Mitchell's soldiers.

It would be difficult not to overstate the importance of the success in the reoccupation of Crater. Not only did the reputation of Britain in South Arabia depend on it but its prestige across the whole of the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli Six Day War of June 1967 confirmed the military superiority of the Israel Defense Force and also signaled a huge defeat for Nasser. By opting for a conventional fight with his nearest neighbors, he played an unwinnable hand. It was something watched closely by Harold Wilson's national security tsar, George Wigg, who urged the prime minister to come to understand the extent to which the prestige and standing of Great Britain have been liquidated in the past few weeks. They also show that the short-term policy should be to keep our heads down whilst in the long run we should lay the foundations of what would be a novel policy of taking fully into account the needs of Great Britain in the modern world.[51]

Wigg's hard-fought battle to convince Wilson of the need to remain vigilant in the wider politico-military struggle with communism amounted to little. In a major debate on defense policy, Wilson told his Conservative opponents:

> The view we took on Aden—on everything we know and have seen—and many of my hon[ourable]. Friends made speeches about this in opposition—the decision to

withdraw our forces from Aden, was and is right and necessary. Aden must have a political solution. I do not underrate the difficulties of getting it. An extension of our presence in Aden would do nothing to further that political solution.[52]

Much depended on a success of the withdrawal. Britain's senior military figure, General Sir Richard Hull, privately admitted that "if the situation in South Arabia deteriorates seriously after independence . . . [little could be done] in time to restore the situation."[53]

It was not without a touch of irony that Mitchell and his senior officers faced a three-way game of duplicity and intrigue from the British colonial authorities and their senior military officers, the Labour government and its diplomats, and Nasser's intelligence services. As the Argylls' intelligence officer (and later adjutant) David Thomson subsequently recalled:

> The Egyptian Intelligence Service were regarded in those days as second only to the Russians in their ability to manipulate and they were well-funded, well-led and we woke up pretty late in life to the depth of penetration that they had had in the area. And of course part of the problem was that . . . we had a Labour Government in power at the time [which had] long standing links with the Front for the Liberation of South Yemen, who were, by-and-large, seen as the predominant terrorist organisation that we were competing with. Again, very late in life, people began to realise that there was another organisation, the NLF, very much in the hands of the EIS, who were likely to become the dominant partner in any future regime in Aden, and, of course, indeed, did. And therefore, the conflict between those two and a Labour Government which had almost wedded themselves to people who were actually members of FLOSY (and of course they did not necessarily proclaim that at the time) and this was always going to undermine whatever we were going to do in political terms at the end of our time there.[54]

The Argylls, a proud regiment with a reputation for fighting Britain's small wars alongside the Parachute Regiment, Royal Marines, and SAS, were battle-hardened and resolute. They had in their CO a man who would not roll over even amidst the danger lurking down the back alleys of Aden.

However, when all was said and done there was one important factor and that was that Britain's own selfish and strategic interests would continue to trump local interests. As the former governor, Sir Charles Johnston, made perfectly clear in his memoirs, "the safest way of determining our aims in South Arabia will be by a hard-headed calculation of the two interests involved—those of Britain, and of the indigenous inhabitants."[55] Nowhere was this more evident than in the abandonment of the sultans who had for generations abided by treaties concluded with the British.

Britain struggled to understand the armed challenge posed by groups like the NLF and FLOSY. Politicians continued to back FLOSY out of

shared labourist sympathies. It is important that policy should be clear so as to avoid unnecessary tactical risks. It was not at all apparent to soldiers, beyond their SOPs [standard operating procedures] (which covered everything from the mounting of sentries to the proper procedure to follow when searching vehicles at checkpoints), what it was that they were supposed to be accomplishing in Aden and South Arabia. In other words, while they were confident in their ways and means, few were aware of the ends they were supposed to be servicing. Thus—and despite the tough tactics of Colonel Mitchell and the Argylls—the British military could only ever hold ground for a short period of time. Once the politicians accelerated withdrawal plans—known as "W Day"—there was little more that could be done and the British military evacuated, leaving Aden and South Arabia to decide their own destiny.

CONCLUSION

The British experience in South Arabia has been seen as an abject failure. South Yemen expert Fred Halliday maintains that the NLF's "victory was the only one in British colonial history which inflicted a defeat of this kind on the British Army and the British state."[56] He points to Southern Ireland, Cyprus, and Kenya as examples where nationalists had also "won" independence after protracted military struggles. However, he sidesteps what this defeat meant for the Arabs who lived there, a sizable number of whom had supported British rule and protection in this part of the Arabian Peninsula. The new Marxist state was totally unprepared for the task of government, which caused considerable problems in terms of maintaining the local economy and paying members of the SAA and fledgling civil service. Nonetheless, the NLF set about consolidating its position, seeking a closer rapprochement with the Soviet Union and effectively eradicating the tribal-based society that the British had sought to work for over a century through a mixture of economic inducement and coercive power. However, it might be worth considering the words of the last high commissioner, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, who has suggested that:

> In the end, our withdrawal was no success, but no humiliation either; for it was the result not of military or political pressure, but of our own decision to leave, and, if we failed to hand over our colony in the manner which we would have wished, it was principally not because the South Arabians were unable to produce in time a responsible political party having the support of the majority of the people and prepared to negotiate a more civilised approach to independence.[57]

In reality, Trevelyan no more understood the NLF position than his political masters in London or, for that matter, their former paymasters in Cairo. The NLF, under the conspiratorial guidance of MAN, prosecuted

a deliberate plan of subversion, insurgency, and terrorism that was strategically orientated toward seizing power from the British; for better to have seized it than to have had it handed over. The legitimacy of the NLF position up until the departure of the last remaining British soldier depended on creating a myth about the purposeful and organized seizure of power by revolutionary forces. While it was certainly true that the NLF capitalized on an opportunity arising from tribal revolt upcountry in Dhala in late 1963, it nonetheless took an enormous amount of revolutionary zealotry to keep all of its fighters from accepting anything less. It also required that the British would want to leave Aden of their own accord, for the NLF's strategy of harassment in the rural hinterland would not make significant inroads into the urban area until the summer months of 1967 and even then the Marxists were not pushing at an open door.

British involvement in its only Crown colony in the Middle East is rarely talked about today and there remains a palpable lack of education on the final stages of British decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s. This has, unfortunately, not been helped by the onset of a case-study approach to "postwar British counterinsurgency" that tends to analyze the past according to a set of ahistorical concepts that tend to obscure more than they reveal about Britain's involvement in South Arabia. As this chapter has attempted to show, what is badly needed is an understanding of the political and military dynamics informing insurgency and counterinsurgency and how they interacted in the engagement with British security forces and their tribal allies. For as the great military thinker Carl von Clausewitz has shown us, "Like two incompatible elements, armies must continually destroy one another. Like fire and water they never find themselves in a state of equilibrium, but must keep on interacting until one of them has completely disappeared."[58]

NOTES

1. Sir Kennedy Trevaskis, *Shades of Amber: A South Arabian Episode* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 218.

2. For detailed discussion on the effects withdrawal had on security in Aden see Julian Paget, *Last Post: Aden, 1964–1967* (London: Faber, 1969); Fred Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans* (London: Penguin, 1974); Vitaly Naumkin, *Red Wolves of Yemen: The Struggle for Independence* (Cambridge: The Oleander Press, 2004); Jonathan Walker, *Aden Insurgency: The Savage War in South Arabia, 1962–67* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2005); and Aaron Edwards, *Mad Mitch's Tribal Law: Aden and the End of Empire* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2014).

3. This is a sentiment echoed in the analysis of the Aden insurgency in the work of Walker, *Aden Insurgency* and Edwards, *Mad Mitch's Tribal Law.*

4. The South Arabian hinterland stretched from Lahej in the southwest to the mountainous region of Beihan in the northwest and beyond to the Hadhramaut

and Mahra in the east. Because of its size, the British divided the territory into two administrative units, known as the Western Aden Protectorate and Eastern Aden Protectorate. In 1963, Aden (only 75 square miles in size) officially joined the Federation of South Arabia, which had been formed in 1959. When South Arabia gained independence in 1967, it was renamed the Peoples' Republic of South Yemen and Aden became its capital. South and North Yemen were to remain divided until 1990.

5. Edwards, *Mad Mitch's Tribal Law*, 60–63.
6. Interview with Stephen Day, November 29, 2012.
7. Evelyn Waugh, *When the Going Was Good* (London: Penguin, 1951, 2000), 154.
8. Trevaskis, *Shades of Amber*, 129.
9. The "Forward Policy" was the strategy by which Britain administered its rule in the hinterland "indirectly." According to historian Spencer Mawby, it helped consolidate British influence while preventing "changing local circumstances and the associated rise of anticolonial nationalism from undermining the foundations of western influence in the Middle East." See Mawby, *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates*, 2.
10. Sir Kennedy Trevaskis, *The Future of South Arabia* (London: British Commonwealth Union, June 1966). This was something echoed by the Labour Defence Secretary Denis Healey at the time, who had found his visit to South Arabia more than a little exotic. See Denis Healey, *The Time of My Life* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989), 281.
11. Interview with Godfrey Meynell, August 30, 2013.
12. For more detail on the events surrounding October 14, 1963, see Aaron Edwards, "Britain and the Formation of Modern Yemen," *History and Policy*, October 14, 2013. Archived at: http://www.historyandpolicy.org/opinion/opinion_130.html. Accessed: March 7, 2014.
13. Paget, *Last Post*, 47.
14. Ibid., 51–52.
15. Ibid., 46.
16. The most detailed assessment of 45 Commando's role at this time is contained in the autobiography of former Commanding Officer Paddy Stevens. See Lieutenant Colonel T. M. P. 'Paddy' Stevens, *The Long Summer: 45 Commando RM 1963–1964, Aden, Tanganyika and the Radfan* (Eastney: Royal Marines Historical Society, 2009).
17. HQMELF, *Operations in Radfan, 14 April–30 June 1964* (Aden: HQMELF, 1964). Copy in author's possession.
18. Interview with Major Norman Nicholls, July 10, 2013.
19. House of Commons Debates, (Hansard), June 3, 1964, Vol. 695, Col. 164W.
20. Politically, this manifested itself in the form of fraternal relations between the ATUC and the British Labour movement. For more on this point, see Edwards, *Mad Mitch's Tribal Law*, 84.
21. Mawby, *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates*, 17.
22. Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans*, 154.
23. Ibid., 155.

24. National Archives, CO 968/734, Secret: The Aden Base, assessment by the Aden Department, May 6, 1965. See also Edwards, *Defending the Realm? The Politics of Britain's Small Wars since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 162.

25. Figures drawn from Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans* and Gillian King,, *Imperial Outpost: Aden—Its Place in British Strategic Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

26. British Library (Hereafter BL), R/20/D/170, Fadhli Affairs, Reuters Bulletin, February 23, 1964.

27. BL, R/20D/170, Fadhli Affairs, Acting High Commissioner to Secretary of State for the Colonies, February 25, 1964.

28. *Aden Chronicle*, January 23, 1964.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. BL, R/20/D/20, Detention of Persons under Emergency Decree, Secret Telegram from High Commissioner to Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 23, 1963.

32. Noel, Brehony, *Yemen Divided: The Story of a Failed State in South Arabia* (London: IB Tauris, 2011), 17.

33. Maxine Molyneux, Aida Yafai, Aisha Mohsen, and Noor Ba'abadd, "Women and Revolution in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen," *Feminist Review*, 1, (1979), 4–20.

34. Naumkin, *Red Wolves of Yemen*, viii.

35. For more on this point, see Mawby, *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates*.

36. Walker, *Aden Insurgency*, 146.

37. The National Archives, Kew (Hereafter TNA), CO 968/737, Directive from Lieutenant General C. H. P. Harington, C-in-C to GOC Land Forces. January 22, 1965.

38. Ian, Cobain, *Cruel Britannia: A Secret History of Torture* (London: Portobello Books, 2012), Chapter 5.

39. TNA, DEFE 13/529, Letter from Corporal G .S. Lennox, RAOC, to the Editor of *The Sunday Times*, October 25, 1966.

40. TNA, DEFE 24/252, Draft Covering Letter from DPR (Army) to the Editor of *The Sunday Times*, October 25, 1966.

41. TNA, DEFE 13/529, Confidential Note to Secretary of State from Private Secretary on 'Mr Bowen's Report on Aden', dated November 16, 1966.

42. TNA, DEFE 24/252, I.H. Freeland to PS/Minister (Army) on Interrogation Centre Aden—Allegations by Corporal Lennox, January 4, 1967.

43. TNA, CAB/128/41, Meeting held on November 24, 1966. The Attorney General Sir Elwyn Jones was also present.

44. Major General Sir John Willoughby, "Problems of Counter-Insurgency in the Middle East," lecture given at RUSI on November 15, 1967, *The Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* 113, no. 650 (May 1968), 104–12. Quotes on p. 109.

45. Ibid., 112.

46. Brigadier James Lunt, *The Barren Rocks of Aden* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1966), 172–3.

47. BL, R/20/D/208, LIC (Aden) Monthly Intelligence Summaries, Secret Intelligence Briefing for the Colonial Secretary from High Commissioner, May 10, 1966.

48. TNA, DEFE, 24/1896, Letter from Mrs. Stella Cozens to Rt. Hon. George Brown, dated June 1967.

49. Ibid., Miss S. Glasspool to Harold Wilson, dated June 21, 1967.

50. Churchill Archives, Cambridge (Hereafter CAC), GBR/0014/DSND, The Papers of Lord Duncan-Sandys, 14/1/2, HE Vernon, National and Grindlays Bank, Steamer Point, to Sandys, June 21, 1967.

51. London School of Economics Special Collections (Hereafter LSE), Wigg Papers, 4/123, Wigg to Wilson, July 14, 1967.

52. House of Commons Debates (Hansard), Vol. 751, Col. 1101, July 27, 1967.

53. TNA, DEFE 13/575, Note on "South Arabia" from Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Richard Hull, to Secretary of State for Defence, dated July 28, 1967.

54. Interview with Major General David Thomson, April 6, 2012.

55. Charles Hepburn Johnston, *The View from Steamer Point: Being an Account of Three Years in Aden* (London: Collins, 1964), 194.

56. Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans*, 221.

57. Humphrey Trevelyan, *The Middle East in Revolution* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 200.

58. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 216.

CHAPTER 7

The Vietnam War: The Spectrum of Conflict, 1954–75

Daniel Marston

INTRODUCTION

The war in Vietnam[1] is still one of the most controversial and contested wars in U.S. history. Close to 40 years after the end of the conflict, interest in the war has not abated. With the opening up of the Vietnamese archives in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi to more and more researchers, interest in research into this conflict is likely to increase, as evidenced by recent scholarship and the influx of North Vietnamese perspectives that are challenging many of the narratives that have existed in the West since 1975. Among the narratives being challenged[2] are the concept of a counter-insurgency versus a main force war; that General Westmoreland was out of his depth and General Abrams was the correct commander; that the U.S. military had not been trained or equipped to carry out a counter-insurgency campaign; that the U.S. military was not a learning institution; and that the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was a hopeless military that could never hope to defeat the People's Army of North Vietnam (PAVN; or more commonly known at the North Vietnamese Army or NVA) or the Viet Cong (VC).

All of these narratives fail to encompass the reality that, as all wars are, the Vietnam conflict was incredibly complex. The war was not the same in every year of its duration, or in each district or province of South Vietnam, or for all U.S. or ARVN units and formations. One must try to understand the effect of each environment, year, and strategy employed by both sides to try to understand the complexity of this war.

Vietnam was a full-spectrum campaign that encompassed all aspects of war, from political subversion to conventional warfare. Historian Graham Cosmas described it thus:

> From the Military Assistance Advisory Group's Geographically Phased Counterinsurgency Plan of 1961 through General Westmoreland's two-fisted strategy, General Abrams' one war, and the Marshall Committee's area security system, MACV's basic approach to fighting the war in South Vietnam changed only in nomenclature and detail. It consisted throughout of two basic elements. The first was a series of variations on the spreading of the oil-spot approach to pacification. Working outward from relatively secure bases, the allies tried to drive enemy military units from the villages, uproot the Viet Cong political and administrative structure, emplace a pro-government system, and carry out programs to win the allegiance of the peasants. The second element was to destroy major enemy formations and base areas. Initially intended to assist pacification by forestalling enemy offensives, these operations also acquired the purpose of breaking the other side's will by inflicting heavy casualties on its forces. MACV emphasis on the two elements—pacification and offensives—shifted over time in response to conditions in South Vietnam, to the actions of the other side and to policy direction from Washington. The actions of the enemy were the most significant variable in determining the intensity of the main force war and MACV's distribution of resources between big battles, territorial security, and other endeavors.[3]

This chapter will serve as a general introduction to the war, and as a foundation from which to delve deeper into the complexity of the war and the possible reasons for the final defeat of the United States and the Republic of Vietnam. The reader will need to decide for themselves where the role of counterinsurgency fits into the picture.

1954–59[4]

With the creation of the independent states of Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam, and South Vietnam after the Geneva Accords of July 21, 1954, the United States almost immediately shifted their military assistance from the French to the new president of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) or South Vietnam. In doing so, President Eisenhower committed the United States to a new war in Asia.

The aims of the U.S. aid and support commitment were limited: "the establishment and preservation of a noncommunist [state] in South Vietnam."[5] The U.S. organization designated to provide most of the support was the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), under the command of Lieutenant General John O'Daniel. The U.S. government had already sent Brigadier General Edward Lansdale[6] into South Vietnam in a more covert role (Saigon Military Mission) to advise President Ngo Dinh Diem and his government. Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, who

went on to wield considerable power, summed up this era succinctly: "We have a friend who understands us very well but who likes to poke sticks into the spokes of our wheels—France—and another very valued friend who gives us a great deal of monetary assistance but who understands nothing about Vietnam—the United States."[7]

President Diem and his government were already struggling to hold on to power in the mid- to late 1950s, beset by political and religious factions. By the end of 1955, many of the noncommunist political and military opponents to Diem had been defeated; but the most difficult adversaries—the communist "stay behind" elements (more commonly known as the Viet Minh) remained. The North Vietnamese state, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, was too preoccupied with purges, land reform (and later, famine), to be able to offer any concrete support to the southern communists. As a result, many cells and stay behind elements were slowly being destroyed by Diem and the support from Lansdale's planning teams,[8] while at the same time the South Vietnamese security forces were slowly being built up.

By the end of 1955, Diem had consolidated considerable power in South Vietnam and had dealt with many of his opponents. His government had lasted for 18 months, longer than many had expected. Throughout the Diem period, however, tensions had been brewing within the U.S. advisory and embassy teams, and U.S. officials in South Vietnam were dividing up into pro-Diem and anti-Diem camps. This division would ultimately lead to the downfall of Diem in 1963, with tacit U.S. support.[9]

RVN SECURITY EFFORTS

With many political threats neutralized or seriously weakened, Diem turned his attention to the development of the security forces to protect his fledgling state. Lieutenant General Samuel Williams had taken charge of MAAG at the end of 1955 and now had more than 600 advisors in country. General Williams was a close friend of Lansdale and when Lansdale left in 1956, Williams became a close confidant to Diem.[10]

As Williams took over, it became apparent that the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was dealing with significant problems. ARVN[11] was supposed to be at close to 150,000 men strong; its units and formations were also struggling with issues of equipment, training, and leadership. The original mission of ARVN was to be capable of opposing a North Vietnamese invasion autonomously for a period of time, until members of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) could provide support as needed. Training, military academies, technical services, quartering, and so on, all had to be built practically from scratch to fulfill this mission, and many ARVN commanders were sent overseas to other

military academies and staff colleges to be educated. Williams convinced Diem to organize the various battalions into seven divisions.[12]

One of the most controversial aspects of this period is a commonly held view that the MAAG made a fundamental flaw in creating a "conventional" army to oppose a future North Vietnamese invasion, as opposed to creating a force to oppose a guerrilla campaign. In doing so, runs this argument, MAAG left the ARVN ill-equipped and unprepared to meet its actual enemy. Even the official U.S. Army history of the advisory effort states that "Diem and his American advisers thus organized and trained the new army for a Korean-style conflict, rather than for the unconventional guerrilla style of warfare that had characterized the earlier Franco-Viet Minh struggle."[13]

There are a number of issues with this long-standing assumption. First, any army needs to be trained and educated to deal with the spectrum of conflict, from high-intensity conventional war to antiguerrilla operations, or even aid to the civil power duties. Second, General Williams and his staff did push for training in counterguerrilla operations; he specifically advised Diem that the local Viet Minh cadres needed to be destroyed. Third, two large paramilitary forces were created and trained to deal with insurgency in the countryside. Known as the Civil Guard and the Self-Defense Corps, these two units numbered more than 100,000 troops in the late 1950s. They not only dealt with local guerrillas, but also provided a bulwark against possible ARVN political ambitions. Training and equipment efforts started later than expected and, as with all things in South Vietnam during this period, created political tensions involving MAAG, Diem, and the U.S. Embassy.[14] Training and control of this force was the largest of these, one that was not satisfactorily resolved until the early 1960s.

Political struggles notwithstanding, ARVN provided material support to both paramilitary forces when they were attacked. Their actions highlight how both Diem's government and U.S. advisors were thinking about both internal and external threats to the regime. The issues that arose concerned professionalism in the various forces; they did not indicate that Diem, ARVN, or MAAG were unaware of the full-spectrum operations they were likely to be facing.

Fourth, Williams had been correct in organizing a force that could deal with an external threat and in looking to the Korean War as an example. The Korean Military Assistance Group (KMAG) had been very successful by the cease-fire in 1953. The Korean War had encompassed guerrilla as well as conventional fighting, and the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) had contended with both effectively.[15]

Some elements of ARVN performed well during this period, and some performed poorly. Many performance issues arose more from the internal politics of the newly born state, the creation of a new army, and political

fears of security forces that might pose a threat to a fledgling RVN government and less as a result of how much counterguerrilla training ARVN had received. General Williams, observing the politically charged environment, noted: "officers who are performing their duties efficiently are relieved and transferred to other duties. . . . The general impression is that the officer has incurred the ill-will of some high official."[16]

SOUTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST AND NORTH VIETNAMESE STRATEGY

As noted previously, Diem's Anti-Communist Denunciation Campaign (with its armed element) had been very successful generally, but its brutality in certain situations had also alienated some elements of the population. Membership in the South Vietnamese Communist Party (later National Liberation Front) dropped dramatically as people fled to the north to avoid the RVN's efforts. Le Duan, the secretary of the Central Committee's Directorate for South Vietnam, was upset with what he saw as inaction on the part of the North Vietnamese government to support an insurrection in South Vietnam. Le Duan began calling openly for more than political subversion: he called for an armed struggle in South Vietnam. Ho and the Party in the North, however, wished to consolidate their power and to allow for socialism to take hold before embarking on another overt military struggle. Le Duan wrote a pamphlet named *On the Revolution in South Vietnam*, in which he called for further political agitation and subversion of the Diem regime, as well as creating the groundwork for a future armed struggle. His pamphlet was well received by the North Vietnamese Central Committee in 1956, and Le Duan was recalled to North Vietnam in 1957 to fill an important government position.

The communist strategy in South Vietnam for most of 1957 focused on political subversion, assassination, and armed attacks against government targets, but also avoidance of ARVN engagement if possible. Hundreds of former southern Viet Minh fighters went north for training for the new campaign;[17] hearing of this, Diem named the armed teams "Viet Cong" (VC), a derogatory term for Vietnamese communists.[18]

As the campaign progressed, ARVN was drawn more and more into offensive action against the VC. Many of the South Vietnamese paramilitary forces had difficulties holding their own, especially in the Mekong River Delta and north of Saigon along the Cambodian border,[19] but ARVN was quite successful in destroying the VC elements that sought battle in 1958 and 1959. South Vietnamese Communist Party membership, which had dropped dramatically since 1957, continued to do so as a result of the fighting in the countryside, but Diem appeared to be losing ground in some areas of the country as well.

1959–60

In January 1959, at the 15th Plenum of the Party, the North Vietnamese Central Committee adopted a resolution, pushed heavily by Le Duan, calling for the use of force to overthrow the Diem government.[20] By June 1959, elements of the NVA had entered Laos and begun building a network of roads and supply points that would become known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail.[21] On July 8, 1959, an American advisory team supporting the 7th ARVN Division was attacked in their quarters at Bien Hao by the VC. Two Americans were killed and one was wounded—the first Americans to be killed in action in Vietnam.[22]

The VC, with support from the NVA, stepped up their attacks through the end of 1959. ARVN, the South Vietnamese paramilitary forces, and the VC all experienced setbacks.[23] The escalating violence and brutality from both sides was highlighted by the fighting in Ben Tre. Many government posts were captured, as were weapons. Government officials were publicaly executed in front of villages to send a message. After 10 days, ARVN was sent in; they managed to pacify the area, but many civilians were caught up in both the fighting and the recriminations that followed. The VC had failed in their attempt to create a "liberated area"; control of local security was passed back to paramilitary forces.[24]

Communist reports note the difficulties involved in attempting to eradicate the presence of the RVN government in the countryside. Meanwhile, the RVN government enacted new, repressive security laws (Law 10-59) and held military tribunals to try suspects. One communist document recorded: "encountering difficulties, obstacles and losses, under the enemy's cruel terrorism."[25] Some of the laws and tactics used by ARVN and other security forces appeared to have a negative impact on parts of the population. General Williams felt that security forces were key to achieving stability in the countryside: "I believe the task facing the Government of Vietnam . . . is primarily one of achieving greater efficiency in the Army, Civil Guard and the Self-Defense Force through centralized direction, coordination and motivation."[26]

While ARVN and Diem's government were able to stem the tide in Ben Tre and other areas, the VC stepped up their attacks from within the country, as well as from new sanctuaries in neighboring Cambodia. The attack on the ARVN 32nd Infantry Regiment during Tet 1960 (January) was the best known of these and became a major embarrassment for Diem's government. The Tet attack was able to cause much damage to two of the three battalions, though VC troops involved were chased down and partially destroyed during the counterattack. However, the VC were able to seize more than 600 weapons as they withdrew. General Williams described the incident as a "severe blow to the prestige of the [South]

Vietnamese Army and [an] indication of the VC ability to stage large-size, well-planned attacks."[27]

It was during this upsurge of violence in late 1959 and early 1960 that General Williams lifted an important restriction on the U.S. advisors in MAAG. Up to this point, the advisors served at the corps and divisional levels of ARVN and did not go on combat missions. With support from the U.S. commander in chief, Pacific, Admiral Harry Felt, U.S. advisors were allowed to serve in battalions and regiments as advisors. They were also allowed to go on operational missions, with one stipulation that was hard to monitor and prevent: "[that] they do not become involved in actual combat."[28]

By late 1960, it was becoming clear that the North Vietnamese were moving to take charge of the campaign to destroy Diem's government in the south.[29] Perhaps surprisingly, however, Le Duan and others were unhappy about the VC's recent attacks on ARVN and U.S. advisors. They feared that, with an escalation, the United States would be drawn more and more into the conflict, and that this would create more problems for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV, aka North Vietnam). They also feared that both China and the Soviet Union might end aid if they felt the conflict was going to escalate too far. Le Duan and others instructed the South Vietnamese communists to shift their focus for the time being to assassinations and political subversion. With more than 3,500 infiltrators coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in 1960 alone, North Vietnamese communists began to subvert Diem's power in the countryside in earnest, using tactics from intimidation to, in some areas, providing an alternative to Diem's government.[30] The policy was straightforward: "the present rule [RVN] is a disguised colonial regime set up by the US imperialists. . . . [S]uch a regime and administration must be overthrown."[31]

In many conflicts, much of the civilian population tends to sit on the fence and wait to see who might win. Only then will they tend to support one side, motivated by their need to survive. As one RAND report noted: "It was very difficult for the villagers to decide their behavior toward both sides. . . . They listened to the VC and also to the RVN. Both sounded right to them. They didn't know who their master was. . . . They had to be good to both sides in order to protect themselves."[32] This dilemma was well understood within U.S. governmental circles. A memo written and heavily discussed by MAAG, the U.S. Embassy, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), in April 1960, bluntly stated: "the majority of the population in South Vietnam and Laos live in rural areas and have little or no interest in political ideologies. They are neither extreme nationalists nor dedicated Communists but rather apathetic toward each, willing to support whichever side is in momentary local control but only to a degree necessary to avoid inciting the wrath of the other side toward them."[33]

The South Vietnamese Communists ended their 1960 campaign with several successes in various parts of the countryside. In many areas, the RVN's reach was limited to the regional capital, with the security forces based there and hemmed in. There were some areas where the RVN had considerable power and reach, and where the VC had great difficulty in undermining the government's presence. At the end of 1960, the VC strength throughout South Vietnam was only about 10,000, and DRV officials in Hanoi, having decided that the war would not end quickly, created a new front organization—the National Liberation Front. Its aim was to convince observers overseas and in South Vietnam that the VC was a southern dissident group, that some elements were not communist, and that Hanoi was not running the war in the south.

MAAG AND U.S. EMBASSY ASSESSMENTS OF 1960

By the end of 1960, U.S. officials in MAAG and the embassy were coming to different conclusions about the apparent rise in violence and threats to RVN efforts in the countryside. Tensions had arisen between MAAG and the RVN earlier in the year: the U.S. government was willing to support an army of 150,000, and Diem and his chiefs had decided to create a force of 20,000 rangers for antiguerrilla operations. General Williams, along with many of his colleagues in the U.S. military hierarchy, opposed this plan on the grounds that ARVN was still a young army and had more pressing needs for incoming officers, NCOs, and personnel. MAAG was already reporting a major shortfall of officers in key positions and expressed concern that the raising of a new unit would place further strain on ARVN personnel and equipment.

This initiative was influenced by the ongoing debate about whether ARVN was being adequately trained to deal with guerrillas or the VC. While there is some validity to the concerns being raised, they were dwarfed by other, more pressing issues facing ARVN that made contending with the VC difficult under any circumstances.

One of the issues of greater concern to MAAG was the politicization of the ARVN officer corps. Many U.S. advisors had become aware of the politicization of ARVN and the security forces generally, and a common joke at the time was that to be promoted, officers had to rely on the three "Ds": the first, loyalty to *Dang* or the political party of Can Loa (Diem's); the second, *Dao* or religion (preferably Catholicism, since Diem and many of his loyal advisors were Catholic); and the third, *Du*, a derogatory word for the region that Diem had come from.[34] Another issue, raised repeatedly by CIA personnel in Saigon was that the VC had infiltrated ARVN.

Brigadier Lansdale, assessing the situation in 1960, openly dismissed lessons from the British campaign in Malaya, citing his own experience

of fighting the Huks in the Philippines as being more relevant.[35] His memorandum highlighted many of the issues that officers in MAAG had already pointed out: overlapping lines of authority, an insufficiently clear-cut chain of command, inadequate training provision for ARVN units, jurisdiction and support for the Civil Guard, and the potential negative impacts of raising the proposed ranger companies.

General Williams was replaced by Lieutenant General Lionel McGarr in August 1960. McGarr agreed with many of the issues that Williams had raised[36] and, as Williams had already expressed, he felt that the core mission of ARVN was to be prepared to confront a potential NVA invasion. However, he also felt that ARVN would have to contend with the VC as well, and should be prepared accordingly—a position that made sense to many MAAG personnel. Further, he pushed for command of the Civil Corps to be transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Defense.

The U.S. Ambassador at the time, Eldrige Durbrow, welcomed the change in MAAG as he had often been at odds with General Williams. However, Durbrow (along with many of his successors) placed considerable emphasis on the need for President Diem to reform his economic policies and appear to be more "democratic" to a wider demographic base. This was difficult for Diem to achieve. Durbrow also believed that the two greatest threats to the RVN government were the VC and a potential coup. Lieutenant General McGarr agreed with this assessment, but felt that the expansion of the RVNAF was key to staving off the VC and therefore a priority, and that any political or economic reforms were secondary issues.[37]

McGarr did understand some key aspects of counterinsurgency or pacification efforts. He felt (as many did and still do today, with some validity) that guerrillas were the root issue, and that ARVN should prioritize dealing with them. The political aspects of the insurgency should be dealt with by RVN politicians, civil servants, and civil guard.[38] The U.S. government agreed with McGarr and rebuked Durbrow's liberalization efforts.[39]

It is important to discuss what was meant by counterinsurgency or pacification during this period, as many officials used the terms interchangeably. Military operations were carried out to clear insurgent armed groups from a given area; host nation police, usually paramilitary police, would come in as army troops withdrew, to impose order in the area and represent the government. In South Vietnam, this mission would have been carried out by the Civil Corps and other paramilitary forces. Government officials would then bring in administrative measures to represent the local government; aid projects might be started, always visible as part of the host nation effort. Security forces would be used to continue to protect the host nation's government in the given area. This is what had occurred

in previous campaigns that have often been cited as similar, notably the Huk campaign in the Philippines and the Malayan Emergency. It is important, however, to remember a few keys points to avoid simplistic narratives; primary among these is that the enemy in South Vietnam was better armed and organized than in either of the examples cited. Also, British main forces in the Malayan Emergency operated in smaller units, but were not used in static locations. The many paramilitary forces in the Malayan Emergency, chiefly the paramilitary Malayan Police, did much of the static work and the engagement of coercive measures against the population.[40]

A number of contentious issues came to a head in Vietnam on November 11, 1960 when the elite ARVN Parachute Group surrounded the Presidential Palace and called for political reforms, a new government, and a better strategy to deal with the VC. Diem and his brother Nhu barricaded themselves in the basement of the palace and appeared to be starting negotiations with the coup elements. At the same time, they were in touch with various loyal ARVN units, formations, and commanders. While the U.S. government appeared to be neutral, Durbrow did tell Diem to negotiate with the rebels; this drew some accusations of meddling from other U.S. personnel.

The coup was poorly planned and dealt with quickly; loyal ARVN troops arrived, the paratroopers surrendered, and the rebel leadership fled to Cambodia. While the coup may have been farcical in execution, it nevertheless confirmed the politicization of ARVN, which concerned many in both MAAG and the U.S. government. Diem learned from this event as well; he decided not to enact any political or economic reforms and, more damaging for the security forces, did not relinquish any of his power as commander in chief. Hence, the key issue of command and control became even more of a problem.[41]

The formal response from the United States to the coup was the submission of a "Basic Counterinsurgency Plan" from the U.S. Embassy's Country Team Staff Committee for South Vietnam. Under this plan, ARVN would increase by 20,000 men; the Civil Guard would expand to 68,000 men and be placed under the command of the Ministry of Defense; the chain of command would be rationalized; and coordinated intelligence and counterintelligence programs, psychological operations (PSYOPS), and civic action would be established. The RVN was supposed to implement a number of measures to deal with the need for economic and political stability. As a result, South Vietnam went from having 685 U.S. advisors at the end of 1960 to more than 20,000 advisors and U.S. personnel in 1964.[42]

1961–62

The newly elected President John Kennedy met with Lansdale in January 1961. Lansdale, just returned from a trip to Vietnam, reported that the RVN was in critical condition and suggested that Ambassador Durbrow

should be replaced.[43] When the President asked Lansdale about Diem, Lansdale gave his opinion that he was the best person in the RVN, and that the United States needed to be seen to support him.[44] Kennedy also assessed the Basic COIN plan with his senior advisors and approved it at the end of January 1961. Additionally, Kennedy created a Vietnam Task Force under Lansdale's leadership. Lansdale's advice to U.S. personnel in Vietnam was to work with Diem and not try to force him to do anything; the replacement of Durbrow with Frederick Nolting as ambassador meant that this advice began to be applied in Saigon.[45] Mark Moyar described "a new approach for dealing with the South Vietnamese government, one based upon persuasion rather than coercion, that the United States would largely follow for more than two years."[46]

The National Liberation Front (NLF) or VC and North Vietnamese had not been idle. The North Vietnamese reestablished the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) to direct operations in South Vietnam.[47] Supplies and troops continued to infiltrate down a series of routes through southern Laos and then into northern South Vietnam. Various intelligence estimates from this period reported close to 1,000 men a month.[48] NVA regulars entered South Vietnam in April 1961 and attacked various RVN outposts along Route 9.[49] The infiltration and escalation were alarming to all in Saigon and Washington DC, especially after attacks in September in the Central Highlands and the loss of the provincial capital of Phuoc Vinh for a few hours. Kennedy asked the Soviets to apply pressure on the North Vietnamese to stop, but they did nothing. The JCS and the new secretary of defense, William McNamara, discussed the deployment of U.S. forces to protect provincial capitals in South Vietnam[50] as well as the DMZ, which would allow ARVN to send more troops on mobile operations to hunt down and destroy VC and NVA infiltrators.

President Kennedy asked retired General Maxwell Taylor to visit South Vietnam, assess the situation, and talk to Diem about possible deployment of U.S. troops. Taylor met with Diem and the meetings went well, but his report was nevertheless alarming to many in DC. He asserted that "the record shows that the disintegration of the political situation in South Vietnam since 1959 is primarily due to the government's inability to protect its citizens and to conduct the war effectively."[51] Despite this statement, Taylor affirmed that the United States needed to continue working with Diem and his government. He also noted that, while some within ARVN disliked Diem, the army would still work for him because he was the best option available. Taylor also reported that many ARVN officers were first class and dedicated to the cause, and agreed with the proposed deployment of U.S. forces to stem the tide from North Vietnam. President Kennedy agreed with most of Taylor's findings, but did not support sending U.S. ground forces. He chose instead to increase the number of advisors and provision of new equipment and helicopters. Interestingly,

another member of Taylor's team was asked to assess the influence of the NLF's political message. The findings supported those of previous years: that the vast majority of the rural population were interested in their own affairs and had little interest in national politics.[52]

There were disagreements within the Taylor team about how best to handle Diem. They could easily be divided between the Lansdale camp and the Nolting camp. For the time being, the Nolting camp appeared to be winning. Nolting informed Diem that, with the Kennedy administration's continued support, Diem would need to delegate more power, give the United States a say in the decisions of the RVN, and broaden his government. Much debate ensued within the RVN; many Vietnamese considered these requests insulting and that they would make the RVN appear a protectorate to the rest of the world. Over time, the Kennedy administration backed away from several of the Nolting camp's demands, and military equipment and advisors began to flow into South Vietnam, raising personnel numbers from 600 to more than 2,000. Kennedy also appointed a new lieutenant general, Paul Harkins, as the head of MAAG.[53]

In Washington DC, debate continued regarding the role of counterinsurgency or pacification. The State Department, Pentagon, and chief advisors to the president (chiefly Roger Hilsman and Walt Rostow) worked in an interagency committee tasked with developing a national-level coordinated counterinsurgency doctrine. The chair of the committee was the deputy director of the CIA, Richard Bissell. The findings of the committee were signed in as policy in 1962 as the National Security Action Memorandum and later known as the Overseas Internal Defense Policy. The policy emphasized the need for a coordinated political, military, psychological, and economic campaign to destroy any communist subversion within a state. The campaign would use both direct and indirect measures to achieve victory: military forces fighting guerrillas and civilian departments dealing with the political, economic, and social roots of the rebellion.[54]

One major theme of the strategy was the contention that "the United States could control both the course of the war and the conduct of its ally."[55] This reflects an element often misunderstood in such situations: that such aims must be achieved by the host nation with support from the U.S. government. The U.S. Ambassador was supposed to be in charge of most of the advisory effort and to coax the host nation government into focusing on reform. This last point caused considerable tension, as had already been highlighted by previous advisors to Diem, members of MAAG, and the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.

The actual implementation of the plan was also left to the people in country to decide. Major General Victor Krulak, who was the Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities (SACSA) for the

JCS, was quite critical of the plan and how the RVN would view it. He stated: "to teach is not difficult; to advise is not hard, either; to urge, persuade, and cajole are easy projects to undertake. But military operations are executed by a chain of command, and no other way."[56] There was already a history of friction between MAAG and the U.S. Embassy, and even though President Kennedy had reaffirmed the power of the ambassadors in many of the embassies, he also stated that "United States forces operating in the field . . . [are] under the command of the U.S. area commander' and not the Ambassador."[57] Many of these issues would not be resolved until the creation of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program in 1967.[58]

In 1962, after much political wrangling in DC among various U.S. government agencies, it was agreed to expand the size and role of the U.S. military presence in South Vietnam. A new U.S. military command was set up, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), responsible for coordinating all army, navy, and air force efforts in country. It was a hybrid command, as in theory it was subordinate to U.S. Pacific Command (CINCPAC), but Harkins would work closely with the ambassador and the JCS in Washington, DC. Its jurisdiction was limited to U.S. military operations in South Vietnam, while Pacific Command controlled air operations in Vietnam.[59]

The politics behind MACV's four-star command power and the relationship with Ambassador Nolting was Machiavellian in the extreme. After much wrangling, it was decided that the new four-star general, Paul Harkins, would work directly with President Diem and his commanders on military matters. He would keep the U.S. Ambassador informed of any political matters and of his contacts within the RVN; any issues would be resolved through the two chains of command back in DC. The success of this plan rested entirely upon the personalities of the people involved, and in practice there was no single, clearly defined authority overseeing the U.S. effort in Vietnam. Even Diem, while happy with the increased U.S. presence and support, was upset about the fact that he now had to work with multiple U.S. teams to focus his efforts.[60] The role and command and control of MAAG also remained unresolved; initially, it was still treated as a separate command, but over time General Harkins moved to subsume the MAAG under MACV. It would take some two years—until May 1964—to formally bring most of the functions of MAAG under MACV.[61]

It was also during the first half of 1962 that the controversial "strategic hamlet" program began. The RVN started to create fortified villages, with both a security force and a political cadre to oppose the VC and their political cadres. The United States helped fund the expansion of both the Civil Guard companies and the Self-Defense Corps that protected the strategic hamlets. Lessons had been learned from a previous failed

attempt at fortified villages—the "agroville project" of the late 1950s—strong rural settlements set up by the RVN in 1959, similar to the later "Strategic Hamlets." The expansion of the new project became a major political battle within RVN, as much of the effort (and, some would argue, the loyalty of the program and the people) came under the remit of Diem's brother Nhu. The Can Loa Party and Republican Youth fell under Nhu's command, and their message and loyalty were tied to the people in the strategic hamlets and vice versa.

Overall the United States and British advisors[62] were supportive of the strategic hamlet effort but raised questions about the location and number of the hamlets. Both Diem and Nhu focused most of their effort in the Central Highlands, in response to the infiltration of the area, while the Americans and British favored the Mekong Delta. The RVN wanted to create 16,000 strategic hamlets in two years; this rate of construction would likely have impaired not only quality but also ability to defend sites under construction from VC attacks. In fact, the security and reinforcement of the hamlets was sporadic from the program's first months; neither the Civil Guard nor the ARVN consistently provided reinforcement when word arrived of VC attacks.[63]

At the end of 1962, more than 3,000 strategic hamlets had been classified as completed, but MACV reported that only 600 had adequate security, equipment, and political cadre infrastructure in place. U.S. and British advisors had initially been resistant to focusing hamlet building in the Central Highlands, but they appeared to be doing well. The ethnically distinct Montagnards ("Yards") were the dominant group in the highlands. The CIA began to work in the area as well, establishing the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG), which were similar to the Self-Defense Corps. The monies for the raising and training for these "Yard" CIDG came initially from the CIA and later from the U.S. Army Special Forces "Green Berets" (USSF) (at which point it became known as Operation *Switchback*).[64] The strategic hamlets had some issues during this period, but the VC and COSVN acknowledged them as a legitimate threat to their ability to control parts of the countryside. As one VC report from the Mekong Delta region stated: "we expended tremendous efforts in the program to destroy strategic hamlets but in fact accomplished very little."[65]

At the same time, the North Vietnamese had slowed down some of their efforts. Many observers believe that they did this for two main reasons: one, to forestall an overt U.S. escalation of the war with U.S. troops being deployed; two, because the DRV was gathering strength for a coming war that was likely to be protracted.[66] The RVNAF, bolstered by an influx of US advisors, were also inflicting damage on the VC and NVA in the countryside.[67]

Although there was hope among North Vietnamese observers that internal unrest within ARVN would escalate and possibly spark a coup

attempt, RVN leadership appeared to be improving at this period, according to feedback from MACV and other U.S. agencies.[68] The NLF four-point manifesto, published in July 1962, called for an end to the U.S. military presence; cessation of RVN's "terror" campaign; formation of a coalition government representing all political parties, religions, and sects; and an end to the military training of youth, public servants, and students. It also specified that RVN must be neutral and accept aid from all countries, not just the United States.[69]

Despite reports of difficulty for the NLF and VC operating in the South Vietnamese countryside, other intelligence reported growing VC influence in the countryside and leadership issues in ARVN.[70] The stated aims of the NLF, with DRV support, remained consistent; an internal document highlights this: "owing to our preserving struggle, the enemy may get bogged down, unable to win. The more protracted the struggle, the more of a disadvantage they will face. Therefore they may be forced to negotiate and compromise . . . or the outcome could be similar to the Algerian defeat of the French, whereby the enemy would be obliged to recognize our sovereignty and independence."[71]

By the end of 1962, reports indicated generally improved ARVN and other RVNAF performance. U.S. officials and journalists, and even VC observers, had taken note.[72] Gen Harkins had worked closely with President Diem to replace numerous ineffectual commanders. However, issues remained concerning the chain of command, particularly the command of ARVN Special Forces, and the very central role that Diem continued to play in the promotions of officers and allocation of resources, mostly motivated by his continuing fear of more coup attempts. U.S. advisors noted the concentration of power that still rested with the two Ngo brothers as well as Nhu's wife, "Madame Nhu." This impeded political functions and the RVN's efforts to achieve a unified strategy to overcome the NLF and the DRV in the countryside.

The RVN's Joint General Staff created an offensive plan for 1963, in coordination with the Joint Operations Center from MACV and with Diem's approval. It was a phased program: RVN agencies, ARVN, and other security forces would cooperate in a nationwide offensive against the VC. The offensives were to be divided into three phases, each with multiple layers of small and large unit actions. The security forces were to be reorganized, with planning to occur from the provincial level to the national level. The strategic hamlet program was to be tied in as well. The second phase would involve military operations to take on VC main forces and base areas, to pacify targeted areas for further governmental control and influence. The third phase ran concurrently to the second; as the areas were cleared, the government pacified.[73] (In today's simpler parlance: clear, hold, and build.) However, as any officer or government official who has worked in Afghanistan or Iraq can attest, execution is a

lot harder than planning, and taking on the NLF, VC, and PAVN was no exception. 1963 was to prove a watershed year for operations in Vietnam.

1963

By the start of 1963, the RVN's security forces had grown by more than 100,000 in ARVN, Civil Corps, and Self-Defense units. American advisors in MAAG and MACV remained concerned about Diem's political influence over promotions and selection, in ARVN in particular. Diem also sporadically pressed his generals to avoid too many casualties. Another area of concern was the actual deployment of ARVN units; U.S. advisors regularly reported finding ARVN units in static positions, while Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps units were actively hunting down and fighting VC. Some advisors openly disdained ARVN as "an armed force that was poorly organized, poorly trained, and poorly led."[74]

The Battle of Ap Bac[75] on January 2, 1963 reinforced many contemporary negative impressions of ARVN, although it is important not to place too much emphasis on any single engagement. U.S. intelligence had honed in on a VC radio signal station at Tan Thoi in Dinh Tuong province. The hamlet next to Tan Thoi was Bac, where it was estimated that more than 100 VC were stationed, protecting the radio transmitter. The 7th ARVN Division, who were stationed in the province, was ordered to clear it out.

Subsequent engagement established that the VC had considerably more personnel in the area than originally estimated—some 400 troops, including elements of the 261st and 514th battalions. Several U.S. observers declared that the VC troops they engaged on January 2 were some of the best they had encountered. The strength and firing positions of the VC's defensive layout were first class, and subsequent speculation has ensued as to whether the VC were keen to draw ARVN into a set piece battle on their terms to win a major propaganda victory. ARVN's plan, supported by U.S. advice, was simple: more than 1,000 would move to take the VC positions from different angles. Some would be flown into battle by helicopters, while others would be driven in the new U.S. armored personnel carriers, M113s. The idea was to flush the VC out to the east, where artillery and aircraft would pummel them as they withdrew.

The first attacks, by the Civil Guard, went in at 0635. This and subsequent attacks were stopped in their tracks. The ARVN battalion that was supposed to attack to the north was delayed by fog. The VC were able to deal with the Civil Guard in the south first, and then turn their attention to the north as the ARVN battalion finally arrived on station.[76]

U.S. advisors flew over the battlefield to assess locations for another attack and chose the western side of the hamlet as a good landing zone for helicopters. The first helicopters were thoroughly shot up as they came

in, and supporting helicopter gunships were also damaged as they came in to help. The landing zone was a killing ground as ARVN troops attempted to reach the tree line. As one U.S. advisor recalled: "if you didn't have something to shield you until you got to the tree line, then you'd be cannon fodder. . . . Charlie had dug in real well. They had done a wonderful job."[77]

With tensions mounting during the battle between U.S. advisors and ARVN commanders, mechanized forces were called in next to help support the downed choppers and wounded ARVN in the field. Artillery and aircraft were finding it difficult to contend with the VC's camouflaged positions. By 1330, the M113s had made it to the open rice paddies to evacuate the wounded and dead ARVN, and by 1400 they were able to turn their attention to VC positions in the tree line. The VC were lying in wait; they caused considerable damage to the approaching M113s, which were forced to withdraw and regroup into larger formations. The battle continued, the VC holding their positions against a barrage of artillery, aircraft, and M113 attacks. An ARVN airborne battalion was airdropped into the battle as well, sustaining heavy casualties when the VC turned their attention to their attack. The VC commander, Colonel Hai Hoang, recognized near nightfall that his forces were all but surrounded, low on ammunition, and had suffered numerous casualties. His reconnaissance had noted an opening to the east, through which he withdrew his troops.

The final casualty count for the Battle of Ap Bac for the ARVN was 80 soldiers killed and more than 100 wounded. U.S. advisors suffered three killed and six wounded. It is estimated that more than 100 VC were killed and an unknown number wounded (as the VC withdrew with their wounded). It was a tactical defeat for ARVN, but the VC had suffered as well.

One of the main reasons why Ap Bac became so well known, and was considered such an important defeat, was because of one of the U.S. advisors, Lieutenant Colonel John Paul Vann. Vann sought out U.S. journalists in Saigon to tell them the "truth about the battle," which he characterized as "a miserable damn performance . . . just like it always is." There has been, and continues to be, much debate about the role and performance of Lieutenant Colonel Vann, both on the day of the battle and in subsequent years, which is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it is important to note that he is only one person, and that his observations, because they were shared with journalists in Saigon, assumed a perhaps disproportionate importance, and consequently came to color the image of ARVN and the war effort as a whole.[78] It also triggered ongoing debates in both Saigon and DC about the state of the war and the performance of both the RVN and ARVN. The NLF were able to use the battle to great propaganda effect as they moved through villages, boasting of their success in destroying the latest U.S. weapon systems, armored personnel carriers (APCs), and helicopters.[79]

One recurring issue that emerged clearly from the battle analysis was that ARVN leadership was slow in reacting and did not prosecute attacks consistently enough against the well-entrenched enemy.[80] Another lesson learned on the day was that the VC would stand and fight to a certain point, even against overwhelming firepower, and then withdraw after inflicting heavy casualties. U.S. commanders would learn about this tactic firsthand when they began confronting VC main forces and PAVN in 1965.

While Ap Bac created intensive debates in both Saigon and DC, questions also began to arise concerning the rule of Diem and his family. A damning U.S. intelligence report was filed in February 1963, which declared: "Although there is no doubt that President Diem and his family are dedicated to Vietnamese independence, they are also deeply committed to maintaining themselves in power. . . . They have driven into opposition or into exile many whose talents are sorely needed."[81] In his defense, Diem had begun to organize the RVN and the security forces into a cohesive force to contend with opposition in the countryside, establishing three corps-level tactical zones (later four) to carry out a combined pacification plan.[82] The four zones were I [northern South Vietnam], II [central highlands], III [in and around Saigon], and IV [Mekong Delta] Corps. This organization extended to the provincial and district levels, and on paper, it looked like a solid strategy to deal with the conditions of 1963. In practice, however, implementation was more complicated.[83] As is the case with many aspects of the Vietnam War, however, there is also evidence to the contrary: one North Vietnamese report described "protracted and large-scale operations launched unremittingly against any given region [that] were numerous and fiercer than in the previous year." Another report noted that, "with a network of outposts and strong points and a web of roads, airfields, and strategic hamlets, the enemy was able to establish fairly tight control."[84] However, communist infiltration continued at a high rate, usually between 1,000 and 1,500 a month. The U.S. mission was also being questioned; some observers felt that there were still three different efforts (MACV, military; CIA, paramilitary; and the U.S. Operations Mission, foreign aid) operating in parallel, in spite of the stated aims of the National Campaign Plan. It was clear that the MACV mission, due to its size and resources, had become the dominant partner; however, the three missions generally worked well together and rarely contradicted one another in public.

This harmonious cooperation was ruptured by the Buddhist uprisings in spring and summer of 1963.[85] The Buddhist sect, which had believed for many years that Diem and the RVN were too repressive in their measures, and openly favored Catholics over Buddhists within the RVN and in the local communities, launched public protests in May in the key historical city of Hue. The police responded and nine protestors were killed,

sparking additional protests across the major cities of South Vietnam. The Buddhists were well organized and communicated effectively to the wider world[86] their accusations that Diem and his government had repressed their demands for reform. Diem viewed these protests and the Buddhist movement as a direct political threat to his power, but under pressure from the U.S. Embassy he was forced to make some concessions to the Buddhist demands. At the same time, his brother Nhu formed a counterpropaganda network and police intimidation program.

Tensions continued throughout the summer of 1963. The protesters and the government were on a collision course, as protests continued, punctuated by numerous self-immolations by Buddhist clergy. Senior commanders within ARVN, including some Buddhists, met with Diem on August 18 to insist that the protests had carried on for too long. They felt that the VC had infiltrated the movement, and the recent success in the countryside was slipping away as a result. They urged Diem to authorize the forced evacuation of the pagodas and imposition of martial law.[87] On August 21, RVN Special Forces, police, and Republican Guards, acting on Nhu's orders, carried out a series of raids and arrests across the country in an attempt to stamp out the protest movement. Thousands were arrested and 30 pagodas were seized. VC and NLF propaganda was seized at some of the locations, supporting the claims by some within ARVN that the VC had been infiltrating the protest movement. Some outside observers felt that the mass round up was completely justified; one Canadian observer considered it "justified in light of the warlike preparations in the pagodas and the clear intent of the Buddhist leadership to go on with political agitation until the government was overthrown."[88]

Whatever advantage may have been gained in the short term, this crackdown increased the outcry of opposition to Diem and his government's actions overall. At this point, several senior and mid-level RVN officials resigned from office. Various ARVN commanders also tried to distance themselves from the activities of the 21st and to place blame in other quarters. Tensions in the U.S. Embassy increased to the point of creating schisms between those who supported Diem's and the RVN's efforts, and those who considered them too repressive. Some key officials felt that all the good pacification work completed since the start of the year was slipping away because Diem was unable to brook any opposition to his power and/or negotiate an agreement with the Buddhists. Many junior and mid-level officials, both military and civilian, discussed their opinions and concerns with the U.S. journalist community in Saigon. President Kennedy sent out a number of fact-finding teams to assess the situation; many of their reports reflected the differences of the situation, rather than offering any particular solutions to the problems.[89]

The Buddhist protests were to have a lasting impact on the RVN. By August, Major General Duong Van Minh, Tran Van Don, and other

senior commanders in the ARVN Joint General Staff were planning a coup against Diem and his family. Their immediate goal was the ouster of Diem's brother Nhu from any more interference in security operations, but initially they were willing to keep Diem if he was willing to reform. Other ARVN officers, including three of four corps commanders, supported the conspirators, and they began to feel out others in ARVN and in the RVN as well. They also approached members of the U.S. mission, knowing that U.S. backing would be important and that U.S. opposition would constitute a death knell to their efforts. There was a major personnel change in the U.S. Embassy at the same time, as Ambassador Nolting resigned for family reasons and was replaced by former Republican senator from Massachusetts, Henry Cabot Lodge. The general's overture was given to Ambassador Lodge upon his arrival not long after the pagoda raids in August.[90]

The U.S. mission in Saigon, trying to assess what should be done, created a draft cable with no input from many of the agencies in DC. The draft cable clearly indicated a shift in policy regarding Diem's government: it called explicitly for the removal of Nhu and others within the RVN government whom the U.S. mission had deemed unfit. The new ambassador was to issue a statement absolving the RVNAF from complicity in the pagoda raids and to place all blame on Nhu (overlooking the August 18 meeting between ARVN commanders and Diem). U.S. aid and support would continue only with the ending of anti-Buddhist activities, release of prisoners, and, most shocking of all, plans to "examine all possible alternative leadership and make detailed plans as to how we might bring about Diem's replacement if this should become necessary."[91]

The cable went out without approval from Kennedy or senior officials. Debates erupted in DC regarding its merits, and outrage was expressed by some who felt that the cable contravened the agreed course of action in Vietnam. Diem had a number of important supporters in DC, notably General Maxwell Taylor of the JCS, Secretary of Defense McNamara, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, and former Ambassador Nolting.[92] Despite the uproar, however, no one countermanded the cable that was now sitting with Ambassador Lodge in Saigon, and consequently further action was taken based upon its directives.

General Harkins worked closely with Ambassador Lodge to set up meetings with some of the conspirators. Both men agreed that Nhu had to be replaced and that the pagoda raids should be condemned. Harkins also favored supporting the "rebels" in their attempt to seize power if ARVN and other RVNAF supported Diem and came to his aid. Harkins was scheduled to meet with General Minh on August 31, but this meeting was called off by the "rebels" who felt that they still did not have enough support within ARVN to move against Diem. Debates in DC continued while Minh and his conspirators hesitated.

By the end of September, following a series of high-level fact-finding missions, including General Taylor and Secretary of Defense McNamara, the Kennedy administration began formulating an official policy regarding the conspirators.[93] The McNamara and Taylor report emphasized the need to cut off aid to force President Diem to reform major aspects of the way he did business. If Diem refused to carry out the reforms within a set time period, the United States should consider supporting a coup. President Kennedy further reinforced this by making public statements that the war was going well for the RVN and that the U.S. presence may decrease, given the RVN's successes in the countryside. At the same time, he declared that political reconciliation needed to occur in South Vietnam and that the suppression of the Buddhists was counterproductive to final victory over the Viet Cong.[94] Privately, Lodge was told to suspend most nonmilitary aid to the RVN, and the CIA chief, who was close to Nhu, was recalled from Saigon.

In early October, the ARVN conspirators approached the U.S. mission, stating that they now had enough internal support for a coup. They wanted to know if the U.S. government would oppose their moves and also whether they would continue both military and nonmilitary aid to a new regime. The U.S. government told Lodge to communicate with the conspirators, and that U.S. aid would flow, as long as the new regime brought in reforms, prosecuted the war effort, and improved relations within the opposition in the RVN.[95] Kennedy specifically instructed Lodge to avoid giving overt aid to a coup, but to identify and build contacts with the possible future leadership.[96]

These developments increased tensions within the U.S. mission in Vietnam. Ambassador Lodge was told to limit overt support for any future coup. MACV applied pressure on Diem to put the Special Forces under the command of Joint General Staff and further away from the influence of the Nhu and his own loyal supporters. While Lodge and Harkins were in agreement regarding a potential coup and most of the assurances that the conspirators sought, there was one fundamental disagreement between them: Harkins felt that Nhu needed to be replaced, but wanted to keep Diem as head of state.[97] He believed that Diem had issues, but that he was a strong leader who would carry out reforms after the coup. He also considered Diem a solid civilian leader and felt that many of the ARVN generals lacked the required leadership skills. He cautioned that the United States should "not to try to change horses too quickly . . . [but] continue to take persuasive actions that will make the horses change their course and methods of action."[98] Lodge, however, felt that Diem had to go as well.

Another issue that started to cause problems between MACV and the embassy was that Harkins felt that Lodge treated him like a subordinate and not as an equal. This highlighted one of the ongoing issues with

U.S. planning in Vietnam: functioning often relied on personalities, and if people did not work well together, communication and effectiveness deteriorated. In the end, the two men stopped speaking with one another; Lodge met with the conspirators without including Harkins. Harkins claimed that he thought that the coup discussions had ended by the end of October when he told senior ARVN generals that it was not a good time to commit a coup following recent ARVN successes in the countryside. Lodge took command in all communications between the U.S. government and the conspirators and shut out most of MACV staff from ARVN planning. President Kennedy and others in the administration became frustrated with the lack of information from Harkins; when they realized that he was being shut out of discussions, Kennedy demanded that he be included in future meetings with Lodge and the conspirators. President Kennedy made it clear to the U.S. mission at the end of October: "if the three men [Lodge, Harkins and CIA Station chief] could not agree on what to say, they should refer the matter to Washington for resolution."[99]

The generals moved against Diem and his brother on November 1, 1963, deploying units to seize key areas of Saigon. U.S. advisors had been told to get off the streets and not to offer support if fighting broke out. However, only the Presidential Guard brigade put up any defense of Diem, and by the afternoon MACV had assessed that the vast majority of the divisional and corps level commanders supported the coup. By the early hours of November 2, the Presidential Guard had surrendered after some heavy fighting. The rebel assault on the palace was led by Colonel Nguyen Van Thieu, of whom we will hear more later.

Diem and his brother attempted to flee, but were captured and killed. Major General Minh asserted that "Diem could not be allowed to live, because he was too respected among simple, gullible people in the countryside. . . . [W]e had to kill Nhu because he was so widely feared—and he had created organizations there were arms of his personal power."[100] This, of course, was what COSVN, NLF, and DRV had hoped for—a coup—and now they had it.

Following Diem's capture, his cabinet was dissolved and the National Assembly suspended the 1956 constitution. A mixed civilian-military government was formed; General Minh headed the Military Revolutionary Council and Diem's vice president, Nguyen Ngoc Tho, was the new premier. On November 8, President Kennedy and the U.S. government recognized the new government. A series of changes occurred within ARVN as people were replaced, promoted, or demoted. Harkins had met with General Don, who was the minister of defense. He made it clear to them that he still expected specific reforms to occur, especially within the RVNAF. He emphasized the need for better training of the paramilitary forces, improved training for ARVN, resolving chain

of command issues, and clearer division of military authority between the province chiefs and the divisional commanders.

Tensions remained within the U.S. mission as Harkins and Lodge still disagreed about the final outcomes of the coup. As one author bluntly stated: "initial American optimism notwithstanding, the elimination of Diem did nothing to remedy the fundamental political, social, and institutional deficiencies of South Vietnam. Instead, the fall of the government simply swept away most of what administrative machinery the nation had. At the same time, the Kennedy administration by associating itself publicly with the anti-Diem forces, left the U.S. government deeply implicated in both the murders of Diem and Nhu and the failings of subsequent regimes."[101] If the coup had created issues, the assassination of President Kennedy later in November created many more.

1964–65

U.S. officials may have felt that the last days of Diem were bad, but the situation worsened steadily following the coup. Robert Komer, the future head of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), recalled that "the political control structure extending from Saigon down into the hamlets disappeared following the November coup."[102] General Minh and his government were toppled in a second, bloodless coup in January 1964, and the U.S. mission gave its support to the new leader, Major General Nguyen Khanh.[103] The new U.S. president, Lyndon Johnson, adopted a two-track approach to issues in South Vietnam. The first was not a departure from previous planning: it focused on reviving the pacification program. However, this proved quite difficult to implement with the RVNAF carrying out a series of coups and countercoups. The second track was the planning for joint U.S. and RVNAF attacks on North Vietnam, in an attempt to stop the DRV's support of the VC. Johnson's first major policy directive, NSAM 288, called for an increase of 50,000 men for ARVN; expansion of the paramilitary forces (the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps were renamed as the Regional and Popular Forces and overall as the Territorial Forces[104]); and more powerful equipment. He also discussed "graduated overt military pressures" against the DRV.[105]

The overall plan for MACV and the RVN during 1964–65 did not change much from previous plans. It emphasized search-and-destroy missions against VC main forces, chiefly carried out by ARVN; clearing operations to take out VC and Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) in a given area, carried out by ARVN and RF; and securing operations to develop the role of the RVN in a given area, carried out chiefly by the PF and National Police. Some people referred to this as the "oil spot" method.[106]

This plan, formally named the "Chien Thang" pacification campaign,[107] was to be centered on the eight key provinces around Saigon.

President Johnson decided to replace General Harkins. He announced this in April 1964, appointing Lieutenant General William Westmoreland to replace him. Westmoreland's orders were to report by August 1, although he would serve as Harkins' deputy through the interim period. Debate is still ongoing 50 years later regarding Westmoreland's understanding of pacification.[108] Most evidence indicates that he did understand the importance of a holistic approach to the war; when he was serving as the MACV deputy in February 1964, he worked with the Deputy Chief of Mission, David Nes to establish an ad hoc pacification committee in an attempt to coordinate the somewhat fragmented operations of the U.S. mission. Ambassador Lodge disbanded the committee in April, considering it a threat to his power. Westmoreland supported the MACV Chief of Staff, Brigadier Stillwell, who proposed that the commander of MACV (COMUSMACV) would be the executive agent for all U.S. pacification efforts. Ambassador Lodge did not make a decision; he stood down and General Maxwell Taylor was appointed U.S. Ambassador in his place.

Ambassador Taylor did not agree with the proposal to make COMUSMACV his executive agent. Instead, he created a Mission Council comprising all of the relevant U.S. agencies, plus MACV. It was to meet once a week to discuss intelligence, planning, and implementation. It was an attempt to bring some order out of chaos, but did not ultimately provide a solution, since not all agencies met every week.[109] Additionally, the U.S. mission was fundamentally hampered by the RVN pacification strategy, which was also in disarray. The U.S. advisory mission remained at consistent levels throughout these transitions, and by the end of 1964 there were more than 20,000 U.S. troops in country as advisors and support troops.[110]

DRV and COSVN planners were not idle during this period. They saw what they had hoped for coming to pass—the collapse of Diem and the subsequent breakdown of a coherent strategy in South Vietnam as the RVNAF vied for power. Before they could take advantage of events, they needed to work out an effective strategy, which took time. In December 1963, the Ninth Plenum of the Central Committee of the DRV, after much debate, presented a secret directive to accelerate the "main force" build-up of the VC, in an effort to destroy the RVNAF on the battlefield.[111] As a member of PAVN recalled: "A COSVN conference to study a resolution from the Center dragged out for twenty-one days arguing about our strategic formula, especially regarding the building up of our forces."[112] While debate on this issue went on in the North, the "main force camp," under the leadership of Le Duan, undertook practical action. The DRV increasingly took control of NLF and VC efforts in the South.

While guerrilla attacks were still considered useful, the push for the creation of regimental- and division-sized units for the VC accelerated. The DRV also moved to replace senior southern commanders with more commanders from the North. General Nguyen Chi Thanh was appointed as the COSVN commander in early 1964; he set out to make sure that the NLF and VC were subjugated to the strategy of COSVN and that the main force strategy moved forward.[113] At the same time, regular PAVN forces began to move into the South to support the main force campaign. The men shifting south at this time were predominantly northern, as many southerners had already returned to VC units. Thus, at the same time that many within MACV and the RVN were focusing on fighting an anti-guerrilla campaign, the DRV and COSVN were escalating the war.[114] The DRV strategy was named GO-GU and it was an encompassing plan to wipe the RVN off the map before the United States became too heavily involved.[115]

Fighting in the countryside increased in intensity throughout 1964, as did numbers of attacks and VC personnel. The numbers for July indicated that the VC had carried out 12 battalion level attacks, and that RVNAF units were suffering from poor leadership and logistical support. One of the most dramatic attacks took place on July 6, when the VC attacked one of the CIDG camps at Nam Dong in Thua Thien province at battalion strength. After heavy close hand-to-hand fighting, the VC were held at bay and eventually driven back with air support and after serious fighting. The USSF team attached to the CIDG lost a few killed and wounded; their courage in this engagement was rewarded with the first Congressional Medal of Honor for the Vietnam War.[116]

Throughout the summer of 1964, the VC were on the ascent and the Johnson administration grew increasingly frustrated. MACV had been successful, working with the RVNAF, in dispersing the security forces as part of the larger Chien Thang pacification plan. However, the VC used this to their advantage. It was estimated that 70 percent of the ARVN battalions in I and II Corps were operating in small and detached outposts, in line with the pacification campaign, and in an attempt to provide security for a series of villages.[117] A COSVN campaign late in 1964 in the strategically important Binh Dinh province capitalized on this arrangement. It deployed two main force battalions to destroy the ARVN outposts; the VC took each outpost one by one, and ARVN had great difficulty in trying to mass in opposition. Westmoreland drew an important lesson from this engagement, one which shaped his thinking for the coming years: "ignore the big units and you [court] disaster."[118]

MACV was also struggling with problems of desertions across the RVNAF. In 1963, there were 9,666 deserters from ARVN, 8,235 from the Civil Guard or Regional Forces (RF) and 18,000 from the Self-Defense Corps or Popular Forces (PF). In 1964, these numbers

skyrocketed: 21,000 in ARVN alone, 15,000 in the RF, and 36,000 in the PF.[119] It would grow worse in 1965.

Another major concern during this period was the political instability in Saigon, with various RVNAF and civilian groups vying for power and multiple coups (six within 18 months). This increased pressure on units who were not only trying to keep the VC and PAVN at bay, but also had to monitor events in Saigon, constantly looking over their shoulders to check on the latest developments and assess what it meant for men and commanders. An unsuccessful RVN pacification operation at Hop Tac in September 1964 was attributed to the political instability in Saigon.[120] Westmoreland recognized early on that unless political stability was restored, the country would fall to the VC. A MACV study emphasized that the "lack of stability in the GVN [Government of Vietnam] and RVNAF" was a major issue, one which required resolution. One solution proposed was to create a joint U.S./RVNAF military command structure; this was rejected, however, as the RVN was unwilling to be seen as controlled by MACV.[121]

Escalation took on a new dimension in August 1964 when the U.S. Navy (USN) destroyer *Maddox* was attacked in the Gulf of Tonkin.[122] President Johnson sought congressional approval to retaliate, and the first air strikes from USN carriers began on August 4. After attacking a few PAVN gunboats and installations, the USN lost two aircraft. Johnson approached Congress once again for a wider resolution, seeking the authority to "take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."[123] Congress' response was the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. The U.S. House of Representatives voted 416-0 in favor of authorizing the use of military force in Southeast Asia. During Senate deliberations, only two senators spoke against the resolution, resulting in a vote of 98-2 in favor.[124]

The situation in Saigon remained tumultuous, with General Khanh attempting to hold on to power and much of the city in turmoil. In late October, a civilian team, the High National Council, took power, headed by Phan Khac Suu and Tran Van Huong. MACV and the U.S. Embassy tried to forestall various groups' attempts to seize power and to focus the RVN and RVNAF on the war against the VC in the countryside.

As planning for U.S. air attacks into Southeast Asia progressed, some MACV planners recognized the threat to U.S. airbases in the RVN. In August 1964, Westmoreland initially asked for U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army (USA) ground troops to protect the airfields. At first, the JCS in DC considered this unnecessary, although a Marine amphibious brigade was placed on alert. The 9th Marine Brigade spent the remainder of 1964 sailing in the South China Sea, prepared to land in the RVN to counter coups or protect airbases if required. Several antiaircraft units

were also earmarked for deployment to the RVN; however, no U.S. ground troops entered the RVN during the remainder of 1964.

The VC attacked several high-value targets as the year drew to a close. Westmoreland initially hesitated about responding to the escalation; he felt that the internal dynamics of the RVN needed to work themselves out first. By the end of 1964, however, Westmoreland and Taylor were in agreement that an immediate bombing campaign of the DRV was needed to respond to escalating VC attacks in the RVN. Operation *Rolling Thunder*, the U.S. airpower response, began on March 2, 1965. The war had escalated for both sides, and the collision course was set.[125]

Two PAVN divisions infiltrated into the Central Highlands in early 1965 and, combined with local VC units, created numerous problems for I and II Corps' efforts to carry out the Chien Thang pacification program in the top and middle parts of the RVN. COSVN was carrying out a main force campaign, with support from guerrilla forces, and they were pushing hard to destroy the RVN before any potential U.S. intervention could be launched. COSVN had already caused considerable damage in Binh Dinh and could claim control of four districts. RVNAF casualty rates multiplied threefold during the first months of 1965, compared to the previous year.[126] Le Duan was frank in his assessment: "the liberation war of South Vietnam has progressed by leaps and bounds. . . . [A]fter the battle of Ap Bac the enemy knew it would be difficult to defeat us. After the Binh Gia campaign[127] the enemy realized that he was in the process of being defeated."[128]

The VC and PAVN attacked U.S. airfields and bases with increasing ferocity. The JCS, MACV, and CINCPAC began planning for an infusion of U.S. ground troops to protect the airbases. In February, there were many discussions about whether to deploy the 9th Marine Brigade; in early March, Ambassador Taylor and Westmoreland met with the RVNAF leadership to discuss the deployment of the Marines. The RVNAF did not oppose the plan, and on March 7, JCS ordered the landing of the 9th Marine Brigade at Da Nang to protect the U.S. airfield. The Marines were specifically ordered not to "engage in combat operations against enemy forces except for its own protection or the protection of installations":[129] an attempt by both the JCS and MACV to keep U.S. ground forces out of the RVNAF's ground war.

Le Duan recognized that the impending U.S. intervention would interfere with his GO-GU plan. The Eleventh Plenum in March in the DRV decided to keep pushing the main force campaign, even in the face of anticipated U.S. escalation. Le Duan and Thanh were clear that their strategy was not changing: "increase [our] military forces, and match the enemy's growing numbers."[130]

In early March, President Johnson sent the Army Chief of Staff, General Harold Johnson, to assess the situation and discuss potential U.S. ground troop deployments. General Westmoreland bluntly advised General Johnson that the Vietnam situation had "deteriorated rapidly and

extensively in the past several months and that major remedial actions must be quickly undertaken."[131] General Johnson, reporting to the president in mid-March, laid out three options: (1) refine the present mission of advice and support; (2) dispatch U.S. combat troops to the RVN to take charge of key areas and allow the RVNAF to refocus its efforts elsewhere; and (3) deploy four divisions to cut across the Ho Chi Minh Trail in the north and cut off the infiltration network. The JCS also offered their report, calling for the deployment of a few divisions and more Marines into I and II Corps in a ground combat role to take on PAVN and the VC. Westmoreland proposed the deployment of one USA division in a combat role in the Central Highlands.[132]

Ambassador Taylor was opposed to a large increase of U.S. ground forces; he felt that this would allow the RVNAF to sit back and let the United States do the fighting and would smell of imperialism as well.[133] President Johnson made his decision in early April; he avoided a large increase of ground combat troops, but sent a large logistical element to support the effort, broadened the air and naval campaign, and deployed a few more Marine battalions to protect installations. Within a month, the Marines had begun local search-and-destroy missions and the president had changed his mind as more and more intelligence came in indicating an influx of PAVN units into the RVN and planning for major offensives. At a series of meetings in Hawaii in mid-April to discuss the situation, McNamara made the case to the president for more ground troops: two U.S. Army brigades and a Marine regiment. Johnson accepted McNamara's proposals and the 173rd Airborne Brigade, 1st Brigade, 101th Airborne Division, and 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division were ordered to proceed to South Vietnam to arrive and build up between May and July. As with the Marines, the U.S. Army troops were to have a limited mission: they were to protect installations and carry out defensive measures and, as a last resort, act as a reaction force. As the Marines in I Corps had done, U.S. Army troops would acclimatize to the area and build defensive works, and over time push out and seek enemy units in the area.[134] Le Duan sent Thanh supporting letters to continue "fighting hard."[135]

In the meantime, political developments in Saigon were coming to a head. The civilian leadership was forced out on June 14 by General Nguyen Van Thieu, who became the Chief of Staff of the ruling committee of generals, and Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, who became the prime minister. Westmoreland expostulated, "with governments coming and going as if Saigon was a revolving door . . . I could see little possibility of the South Vietnamese themselves overcoming the military crisis."[136] Westmoreland was also candid with McNamara in his assessment of the state of war in the RVN and the role of the U.S. ground forces: "the fabric of GVN civil functions and services has been rendered so ineffective and listless by successive coups and changes, and the military arm is in such a

need of revitalization, that we can come to no other conclusion" [than to send U.S. ground forces in to "stem the tide"].[137] The war was going badly for RVNAF in II and III Corps as more and more VC and PAVN main forces attacked government positions. In June, ARVN was slowly being destroyed at Dong Xoai, causing intense debates as to whether U.S. troops could be sent to relieve ARVN troops. Eventually, U.S. airpower was authorized to intervene and helped to shift the battle in favor of ARVN. By the end of June, Westmoreland was given clear guidance on the use of U.S. ground forces; he was advised that he could commit U.S. forces "independently of or in conjunction with the South Vietnamese in any situation in which the use of such troops is requested by an appropriate GVN commander and when, [in Westmoreland's] judgment, their use is necessary to strengthen the relative position of GVN forces."[138] The die was cast.

As June 1965 ended, the situation was looking bleak for the RVN. Reports stated that the VC and PAVN had isolated 12 of the 45 provincial capitals and 44 of the 200 district capitals. President Johnson sent Secretary McNamara on a fact-finding mission to meet with Westmoreland. McNamara also met with the senior leadership of the RVNAF, who were now asking outright for more U.S. divisions to stem the flow of recent communist successes. Agreeing would bring the total number of U.S. troops in country to 200,000 soldiers. McNamara asked Prime Minister Ky explicitly whether, if this number was achieved, it would cause issues for his government; Ky said no. Westmoreland presented a two-phase plan: the first phase would involve 175,000 troops (44 battalions) to stem the tide. Phase two, planned for early 1966, would bring in an additional 95,000 troops (24 more battalions) to take offensive action and turn the tide.[139]

McNamara approved Westmoreland's plan. On his return to Washington, he met with President Johnson and the cabinet to brief them on the situation and Westmoreland's proposal. He described the situation as "a hard VC push . . . to dismember the nation and to maul the army."[140] On July 27, President Johnson gave the green light for the first phase, involving some 180,000 troops. General Wheeler from the JCS assured Westmoreland that phase two would be implemented in time for 1966.[141] Other countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea, also committed troops at this point.[142] Johnson went on television on July 28 to advise the U.S. population that he was deploying the 1st Cavalry Division and raising the number of U.S. troops in country to 125,000.[143] The stage was set for a U.S.-dominated campaign.

1965: AMERICANIZATION OF THE WAR

The overall aim of the escalation and infusion of United States and allied ground troops was "to pacify the Republic of Vietnam by destroying the VC . . . while at the same time reestablishing the government

apparatus, strengthening GVN military forces, rebuilding the administrative machinery, and reinstituting the services of the Government."[144] Westmoreland intended to use a strategy similar to that employed in the past, except now with U.S. ground forces in the mix.[145] First phase: halt the enemy. Second phase: resume the offensive (destroy the VC main and guerrilla forces and pacify selected high-value areas). Third phase: win the war (restore the role of the RVN's government to the country). Once again, in the simplest terms, this translated to clear, hold, and build.[146] Westmoreland knew that this would take time and tried to be careful about assigning specific forces to each mission at first. MACV made it clear that all operations would be carried out in coordination with the RVNAF; a directive issued in September 1965 mandated "the participation of Vietnamese forces in operations . . . so that the war does not appear to be a U.S. action against the Vietnamese people."[147] One key issue raised in late 1965 was how much of a role U.S. ground troops should play in the pacification campaign. As the main force threat appeared to dissipate in the months of September and October, MACV and the Marines in I Corps were supportive of U.S. ground troops participating and supporting the RVNAF in pacification duties.

A discussion of the deployment of the 173rd Airborne Brigade provides a useful perspective of the war from the tactical level during this period. The 173rd was based in Okinawa as one of the U.S. Army's rapid reaction or fire brigade force for the Asia/Pacific region. In January 1965, brigade HQ began to carry out contingency planning for a deployment to the RVN. In February it was placed on alert, earmarked to protect the important airfield at Bien Hoa. Over the course of a week in May, the 173rd moved all its assets to Bien Hao and the airfield and port of Vung Tau by air from Okinawa. Heavy equipment was moved by sea freight and arrived by the end of May. The 173rd stood at 2,816 officers, NCOs, and men. Within days of arrival, they had dug defensive positions, linking across the Bien Hao airfield and established supporting artillery. At first, the troops were given rules of engagement (RoE) that only allowed for them to fire if shot at. They were not to enter or fire into any hamlet. The first "offensive counterinsurgency operations" were launched as platoon-sized patrols around the airfield in mid-May. Due to the brigade's lack of previous airmobile training, the 173rd carried out a series of airmobile patrols in and around the airfield to accustom the men to using helicopters. Over this period, the RoE also began to change, allowing more flexibility with firepower.

The first major air assault for the 173rd was with the units at Vung Tau on May 26 and 27; the three companies were airlifted 15 kilometers to the northeast of the base. Over the course of two days, there were a series of skirmishes with the VC. The 173rd had eight casualties, and they estimated having killed or wounded seven VC. In early June, the brigade

received support in the form of the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment[148] (RAR) and the 161st Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery; both units would serve in the brigade for a year. By the end of June, all the units had been collected at Bien Hao.

With all the units consolidated at the airfield, Westmoreland needed to use them more and more to support ARVN operations, especially to the northeast in War Zone D. Throughout the month of July, the brigade, minus 1st RAR, were airlifted into War Zone D to fight alongside ARVN. At first, the Australian government put a restriction on the use of 1st RAR to be part of the various search-and-destroy missions and asked Westmoreland to use the battalion in defense of the Bien Hao airfield. The constantly shifting battlefield and the threat to ARVN forced the use of the 173rd (minus the Aussies) to move into II Corps and the Central Highlands to support ARVN operations against PAVN during August and into early September. The brigade was then moved back to Bien Hao to support the deployment of the U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division to the area. The brigade carried out numerous patrols and search-and-destroy missions, but the VC and PAVN did not stand and fight.[149] PAVN was gathering strength in the Central Highlands as the 1st Cavalry Division assembled. The major battle between PAVN and the 1st Cavalry Division in the Ia Drang valley, in November 1965, indicated that main force engagements were on the increase once again.[150]

The USMC's experiences in I Corps in 1965 also highlight the complexities involved in skirmishing with guerrillas, dealing with VC political cadres, and engaging with main force elements. Lieutenant General Lewis Walt, III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) commander, answered to General Westmoreland[151] and served as the senior advisor to the ARVN I Corps commander.[152] Westmoreland issued explicit orders[153] to III MAF that were consistent with orders given to U.S. Army units and formations; Marines were to carry out the following tasks: "(1) Defend and secure the base Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAORs); (2) conduct search-and-destroy missions against both local VC and more distant enemy locations; (3) conduct clearing operations in contiguous TAORs; and (4) execute contingency plans of COMUSMACV anywhere so directed."[154]

General Walt took these orders and developed what was called the "balanced approach." He recognized the complexity of the battlefield before him but tried to create a plan that could tackle the threat.[155] He created three operational formulas: "(1) Battalion, or larger, operations would be directed toward destroying main force concentrations once positively identified . . . [;] (2) aggressive counterguerilla patrols within, and in proximity to, the population centers; and (3) employing USMC forces as a general shield behind which training of local security forces and other pacification programs could take place."[156] By April, the Marines were actively engaged in patrols outside the perimeters of the various airfields

and enclaves established at Chu Lai, Da Nang, and Phu Bai. By June 1965, there were more than 17,000 Marines in I Corps, as elements of the 3rd Marine Division established themselves.[157] Two things occurred in I Corps during this period that highlighted the difficulty and the attempts at coming to terms with the war: Operation *Starlite* and the Combined Action Program.

Operation *Starlite* was a significant engagement with the 1st VC Regiment (main force), which took place 12 miles south of the Chu Lai enclave in early August. III MAF planners called for a two-battalion attack, one by sea and another by helicopter, to destroy the VC Regiment on August 18, with artillery, air, and naval gunfire support. The plan was to hook and outflank and force the VC to pull back to the sea, where they would be destroyed overall in a decisive battle. As a succession of amphibious landings and helicopter flights went in, the VC positions were taken by surprise. Some started to fight back aggressively for their positions, and after two days of fighting, the VC Regiment attempted to break out. General Walt kept the pressure up for five days, aiming to clear the area.[158] As General Walt stated, "this was not to be an antiguerrilla war, pacification, revolutionary warfare. . . . [T]his was a clash of conventional armed forces against conventional armed forces."[159]

The Combined Action Program (CAP) was an innovative measure intended to fulfill the need to provide security around the enclaves. The simple idea was to take a Marine squad and attach it to a Popular Force (PF) platoon. (The ARVN 1st Division was also acting in support of the plan.) The two units, Marine and PF, would live and fight alongside one another to secure the local area, cooperating on training and intelligence gathering.

The first joint CAP operations began on August 3, 1965. The 3/4th Marines were the first to develop the concept, and the III MAF selected veterans to run the Marine side of the effort.[160] The CAP system had great promise; Walt declared that "we [had] found the key to our main problem—how to fight the war. The struggle was in the rice paddies, in among the people, not passing through, but living among them, night and day."[161] There were issues, however, with the program, both in terms of the numbers of Marines potentially required[162] and the intentions of the VC and PAVN main forces—particularly their interest in drawing the Marines out into the hinterland. Even Walt later recalled: "time after time we identified and closed with the Main Force Viet Cong, each time a little farther back into the mountains or farther north towards the DMZ."[163]

At an important meeting in late November 1965, the RVNAF Joint General Staff highlighted to Secretary McNamara and MACV the issues they were encountering with keeping elite forces or the "general reserve" (parachute troops and marines) in the field following the recent heavy

fighting. The J3 of the RVNAF Joint General Staff, General Nguyen Duc Thang, among others, specifically requested the creation of more airborne and marine units, as well as U.S. reinforcements for I, II, and III Corps. According to Thang, it was also agreed that, due to the recent ARVN attrition, United States and allied ground troops would have the primary mission of search and destroy, while RVNAF took over protection of strategic bases and the pacification mission. Westmoreland did not agree with this plan and laid out an alternative in which 69 of the potential 169 ARVN battalions (many were still being raised) would be earmarked to defend government centers and critical areas; 22 would be used to expand the power of the RVN government; and 71 would be used for offensive operations and as reaction forces to support the pacification effort when needed.[164]

By the end of the year, Thang was appointed the minister for revolutionary development, gaining control of most of the RVN pacification efforts. In January 1966, he organized much of the political effort into the Revolutionary Development Cadres. These cadres, recruited from local areas, trained in anticommunist ideology and formed into teams of around 50 members. The plan was to assign them to hamlets in their local area to support local government, development projects, and farmers, and carry out medical treatment. These teams were put into place after RVNAF or U.S. forces had cleared an area.

The biggest issue that these teams faced was their own security. The VC, fully understanding the threat that they represented, concentrated attacks on them over the coming years. It is also important to note that the RVN pacification effort, after being dormant in 1965, revived in a different guise and with a unified structure in 1966 following the appointment of Thang.[165] The U.S. advisory efforts to pacification were still not combined.[166]

The DRV formalized the takeover of the campaign in the RVN when General Pham Hung joined General Thanh, serving as his deputy in COSVN. The two men continued Le Duan's strategy to "intensify the military struggle" to deal with the influx of U.S. troops. Mass mobilization began in the DRV to fill the ranks in PAVN and to support the VC. The DRV's party campaign called for "readiness to join the army, to partake in battle, and go wherever the fatherland deems necessary."[167] However, as the U.S. forces came in and started to engage the main forces, casualties mounted quite dramatically for both PAVN and the VC. Some within the DRV, including General Giap, called for a return to a guerrilla-style campaign. Others in the party, classified as moderates or Northerners first, wished to negotiate an end to the war so that they could focus on building the socialist revolution in the north and deal with the south later. These divisions caused serious debates between party factions over the next few years, but in the meantime, Le Duan and his main force strategy

remained the dominant plan. They were supported by General Thanh, who expected the United States to seek negotiations due to the attrition that was being meted out on the battlefield.[168]

1966: STEMMING THE TIDE

The conflict in Vietnam cannot be classified easily. It was a main force war, a guerrilla war, a civil war, and a war of pacification. Each year of the war was different from the one before, and an awareness of context is key. The enemy could be VC or PAVN or both, or guerrilla VC forces also, and VC political cadres could also play a part. It truly depended upon the year and the location, and there was no one model or system that could work in every situation.[169]

By the end of 1965, the VC and PAVN main force threat was proving challenging for both II and III Corps. Westmoreland asked for an early deployment of 25th Division from Hawaii; two brigades went to III Corps and one brigade went to the Central Highlands. A conference was held in Honolulu in January 1966, where U.S. and RVN civilian and military leadership met to discuss plans for 1966 and Phase II of the U.S. troop increases. The issue of calling up U.S. reserves was raised once again, but Johnson, still opposed to the idea, avoided the issue. Instead, regular units of the U.S. Army and USMC were again stripped of officers, NCOs, and soldiers to help fill the gaps in the units and formations already in Vietnam.

The campaign objectives for 1966 were laid out by the leadership and given to Westmoreland: "Defend[ing] key military and civilian areas, opening roads and railroads, clearing and securing four national priority pacification zones, and bringing 60 percent of South Vietnam people within secure territory by the end of 1966. . . . [Intensifying] their offensive against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units, bases, and lines of communications within South Vietnam . . . inflicting casualties on their forces at a rate as high as their capability to put men into the field."[170] Their strategy involved both attrition and pacification, although by this point, it appeared that the immediate fear of a collapse in Saigon had been alleviated by the influx of U.S. ground troops.

Debates regarding pacification and U.S. support reignited after the initial threat to Saigon had receded. As part of the U.S./RVN conference, President Johnson met with RVN leadership; both teams emphasized the need to promote pacification efforts to provide breathing space for the RVN. The United States agreed to give more support to the Chieu Hoi program, which allowed former VC members to return to their hamlets and serve the RVN.[171] The United States also provided more advisors and monies for the RF/PF or Territorial Forces; these were increasingly

hampered by issues of recruitment and retention, as VC and PAVN main forces attacked more and more hamlets in an effort to destroy any vestiges of the RVN.

Increased U.S. support came with increased U.S. pressure to return the RVN to civilian control. During the spring and early summer of 1966, political protests broke out once again against Thieu and Ky.[172] The popular I Corps commander, Lieutenant General Nguyen Chanh Thi, had been replaced by Saigon, since Thieu and Ky saw him as a threat. ARVN troops had to be deployed to I Corps to deal with the resulting unrest among the troops. The RVN recognized the need for civilian elections and called for them to take place in the summer of 1967.[173]

The Johnson administration recognized that U.S. support for pacification in South Vietnam was too disjointed, compared to the RVN. Westmoreland concurred, writing that "the South Vietnamese were ahead of us in organization for pacification."[174] U.S. military senior command at the Pentagon and White House were also aware of this issue; Chief of Staff Army General Johnson had sponsored a study named Program for the Pacification and Long-term Development of South Vietnam (PROVN). Released in March 1966, it called for a major reorganization of a U.S. civil-military program to achieve victory.[175] After much wrangling in DC among various agencies and personalities, in late March President Johnson appointed the civilian Robert Komer as his "special presidential assistant for supervising pacification support from the White House."[176]

Komer's authority allowed him to draw upon the resources of the various agencies in DC for the nonmilitary programs that supported pacification in the RVN, and he also had a say regarding the military resources that supported civil programs. The U.S. Embassy was to support Komer when requested and, critically, Komer had direct access to President Johnson.[177] By October 1966, Komer, McNamara, and President Johnson had come to the conclusion that MACV should take charge of all pacification efforts, but recognized that it would take time to achieve due to "stove pipes" in the U.S. government. They correctly foresaw political battles as each of the agencies involved, including U.S. Ambassador Lodge, fought against the plans.[178] In early November, President Johnson ordered Lodge to create the Office of Civil Operations (OCO) to unify all the U.S. pacification plans (except the CIA) under one embassy official with a staff to better coordinate the effort. The deputy ambassador, William Porter, was put in charge. President Johnson made it clear to Lodge that the OCO was on trial for 120 days, "at the end of which we would take stock of progress and reconsider whether to assign all responsibility for [pacification] to COMUSMACV."[179]

Although an improvement on previous U.S. attempts, OCO did not start well. It took time to fill key positions and was forced to rely upon both MACV and the RVNAF for assets to move and support pacification

efforts. Within the 90 days, Komer and others had already decided that, in spite of apparent improvements in coordination, OCO still lacked the assets to achieve much and it was imperative to move management of pacification efforts under MACV.[180]

Contrary to some claims, Westmoreland was supportive of the idea of the OCO—a program designed to unify all ongoing pacification efforts, military and civilian. He understood the need for integration and cooperation. He offered MACV staff and a one-star general, Brigadier Paul Smith, former commander of the 173rd Brigade, to support Porter. He already had more than 1,000 MACV district-level advisors in the field, and he offered their support as well. Westmoreland also created the Revolutionary Development Support Directorate, which coordinated liaison and inspectorate functions with Thang's Revolutionary Development Ministry. He was interested in having OCO and pacification fall under his command but did not express this publicly, not wishing to contribute to the interagency fights already occurring.[181]

While the United States attempted to reorganize the pacification program, the war in the countryside continued to gather strength. One characteristic example was the fighting in III Corps surrounding Saigon. The United States had deployed most of the 1st and 25th Infantry divisions into III Corps, as well as supporting allied forces, alongside some 40,000 RVNAF. VC and PAVN troops in the area numbered some 60,000 men. A large proportion of ARVN and allied troops focused primarily on search-and-destroy missions, while creating bases ringing the city of Saigon. Other units carried out pacification duties, as well as supporting the efforts of agencies from the U.S. Embassy and the RVN government. Even in this one area, the need to understand context is key: due to the enemy's dispositions, the 1st Infantry Division chiefly engaged against VC and PAVN main forces, who were focused in their region, while 25th Infantry Division,[182] at least initially, had a different sort of war.[183]

Major General Frederick Weyand,[184] CG 25th Division, understood that his area of operations would need to encompass both main force engagements and support of pacification efforts with the RVN. He commented that "no single element of the enemy's organization . . . if attacked alone would cause the collapse of his force structure or the reduction of his will to resist."[185] Weyand also knew that his division was likely in for a rough time; the ARVN 25th Division was one of the worst-performing units, the National Police were despised, and many of the hamlets in their area were either openly or partially controlled by the VC. Weyand carried out a few brigade-sized search-and-destroy missions in an attempt to destroy the 165A VC Regiment, but these proved frustrating and ineffectual when the VC repeatedly refused battle and pulled back.

One of 25th Division's more successful operations was Maili in April in Hau Nghia province. This was a combined effort with ARVN and RVN

officials, encompassing clearing and pacification efforts. The United States and RVNAF worked closely and integrated their ambushes and patrolling activities. Maili was considered partially successful, as the RVN was able to backfill the clearances with a form of government presence and the RVNAF provided "stay behind" forces to hold. This style of operations continued through the summer and autumn of 1966, with multiple combined clearance operations in various hamlets. As noted previously, the units and formations carried out various MEDCAPS and country fair activities in the areas. Many officers in the U.S. Army 25th Division were highly critical of U.S. pacification support from the embassy, which at this point was disjointed and inconsistent.[186]

Clearance operations looked good on paper, but many on the ground questioned their long-term impact. RVN government services were still not strong enough, and the RVNAF's effectiveness after U.S. troops pulled back was dubious.[187] One report commented that "the Revolutionary Development (RD) Cadre are still not accomplishing their intended mission, particularly the destruction of the communist infrastructure."[188] By the end of 1966, the U.S. Army 25th Division appeared to be achieving success in pacification, yet the war was still escalating. Analysis of operations in 1966 indicates that only 25 percent were pacification; Weyand still needed to contend with VC and PAVN main forces as they arrived in his division's AO, contrary to his expectations in April 1966.[189]

The war in I Corps escalated as well.[190] As the III MAF and Lieutenant General Walt created and developed the enclaves, CAP was expanded to more and more hamlets. The command structures for CAP developed over time, and it appeared to be making a partial difference in the "village war."[191] However, it must be noted that at no time were more than 2.8 percent of all the Marines in III MAF assigned to CAP. Walt and his command were trying to find the correct balance for the war in each AO. They understood that, even in specific AOs, there were different levels of war and that the focus was constantly shifting from main force elements to pacification and back again. Walt did not differentiate too much between the two, as he wanted his commanders and marines to be capable of fighting the spectrum of conflict. At the start of 1966, Walt did feel that the war was entering a new phase: "we began increasingly to encounter regular soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army, coming out of the western mountains. . . .[T]hey were sturdy, well-fed men with good weapons and equipment, uniformed, disciplined, and organized into companies, battalions, and regiments."[192]

MACV and other intelligence feared a massive PAVN invasion of the northern provinces,[193] especially during the I Corps ARVN revolt. Some of the best ARVN units were based in the northern area as a deterrent to PAVN, but until the revolt was dealt with, attention was necessarily

focused internally. Walt sent out teams to assess the situation in the northern province of Quang Tri. A series of intelligence reports and claims about PAVN movement into the north came back, confirmed in July when captured PAVN soldiers from the elite 324b Division freely confirmed PAVN invasion plans. Walt and his staff decided to move elements of the 3rd Marine Division to the north while the 1st Marine Division, which had been coming into I Corps, would try to backfill some of 3rd Marine Division's areas of responsibility.

Planning went ahead in conjunction with the 1st ARVN Division to clear out any of the PAVN in Quang Tri province. This plan was accepted by MACV and JGS, and ARVN and Walt were told they would have all the support they needed to destroy PAVN in the area. The operation, named *Hastings*, got underway in mid-July.[194]

Over the second half of July and into early August, 8,000 USMC and 3,000 ARVN troops sought out and attempted to destroy the 324b PAVN Division. General Walt was impressed with PAVN's fighting ability: "we found them well equipped, well trained, aggressive to a point of fanaticism. They attacked in mass formations and died in their hundreds."[195] With massive airpower support, the Marines and ARVN were able to inflict close to 1,000 kills and an unknown number of wounded, while losing just under 200 Marines and ARVN. Following on from this battle, the 3rd Marine Division would be closely tied to the DMZ area to forestall any PAVN invasion into Quang Tri City and Hue to the south. Unfortunately for III MAF, this strategy achieved long-term gains for PAVN. The first was that "at year-end [1966] virtually all progress in rural pacification had ceased."[196] Even Lieutenant General Walt realized, looking back in 1970: "They could—and did—force us to commit large numbers of our men to the north, weakening security and giving some relief to the hard-pressed guerrilla forces in other areas. They could—and did—vastly increase the bloodletting, accepting the heavy price upon their own people to impose casualties upon us and add to the war-weariness of the American people."[197]

As 1966 ended, Robert Komer wrote a report on the effectiveness of ARVN and pacification in 1966, and possible plans to improve effectiveness in 1967. It was very much in line with the Combined Campaign Plan for 1967,[198] written by MACV and JGS. He makes a number of recommendations that appear to contradict later assumptions about Komer's beliefs on the role of U.S. forces in fighting main forces. He states forthrightly:

> [O]ur hopes for significant pacification progress in 1967 rest chiefly on shifting approximately 120 battalions of ARVN into the effort . . . [C]lear and hold is the essential prerequisite to civil side progress in the countryside . . . [S]traighten out ARVN's leadership problems. This is probably most important of all . . . US advisors just can't make up for gross deficiencies in their counterparts. We ought

to press Thieu, Ky and Vien to clean their own stables since they are obviously sensitive to our specific suggestions, yet know the shortcomings of ARVN even better than we do . . . In 1966 the main attention of MACV naturally (and correctly) was focused on the US build up and employment of US forces in search and destroy operations against enemy main units . . . [T]he pace of pacification will be determined largely by the success of the military clear and hold effort. Only MACV can make RVNAF do this job better . . . because continuous local security is the prerequisite for all that follows, top priority in 1967 must be to improving ARVN effectiveness as quickly as feasible. *The most likely alternative—and it is a grim one —is that the Americans will otherwise end up having to do this job too*.[199]

The main force battles of 1966 had also begun to have an impact in the DRV. A public feud erupted between Le Duan and General Giap regarding the casualty rates and the main force strategy versus a protracted guerrilla campaign. Giap openly stated that PAVN was being bled white in suicidal missions in the RVN. COSVN commander Thanh defended his offensive strategy, claiming that a defensive strategy would hurt morale. He felt that PAVN and VC main forces needed to engage in set piece battles with the RVNAF and United States, executing a strategy of attrition. By the end of 1966, both Thanh and Le Duan had to accept a rise in casualties as an unwelcome but necessary aspect of a protracted guerrilla warfare campaign.[200] Westmoreland acknowledged that the enemy was "hurt . . . but he was far from defeated."[201]

1967: PACIFICATION AND SEARCH AND DESTROY

As 1967 dawned, both sides were assessing possible changes to their overall strategies. MACV and the RVN remained committed to a combined pacification and attrition or main force engagement strategy. Some MACV veterans, including Major General DePuy, who served as the MACV J3 and later CG of 1st Infantry Division, highlighted one of the major difficulties in seeking out main forces: "we hit more dry holes than I thought we were going to hit. They [VC and PAVN main forces] were more elusive. They controlled the battle better. They were the ones who usually decided whether or not there would be a fight."[202] U.S. divisions arrived in country throughout 1967: the 9th, 101st, and later the Americal (made up of various independent brigades), among others, arrived to support the 1st, 4th, and 25th Infantry Divisions, the 1st Cavalry Division, and the 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions (some 437,000 troops in total). Contrary to accepted mythology, U.S. units were subject to RoE in battle and, with a few notable exceptions,[203] operated within them. Often the greatest difficulty was coordinating with allies such as the Republic of Korea or the RVNAF on applying RoE.

U.S. formations also did learn and adapt to the environment in Vietnam. The biggest issue that they faced throughout their involvement was summarized succinctly by Westmoreland at the end of 1966:

> the enemy has embarked on a war of attrition involving protracted guerrilla warfare supported by large formations of conventional troops operating from base areas and sanctuaries. . . . [H]is purpose is to create a state of mind in our troop units and at home that is characterized by insecurity and futility. . . . [H]e believes that his will and resolve are greater than ours. He expects that he will be the victor in a war of attrition in which our interest will eventually wane.[204]

The U.S. pacification effort received a major boost in 1967. In March, President Johnson appointed Ellsworth Bunker as the new U.S. Ambassador to the RVN, as Lodge wished to retire. Johnson also appointed Lieutenant General Creighton Abrams, vice chief of the army, as one of Westmoreland's deputies, chiefly to reinvigorate the advisory mission with RVNAF. During a meeting on Guam with RVN leadership, President Johnson announced that all U.S. pacification efforts would now fall under the command of MACV, which would advise the RVN pacification efforts. The old OCO and the MACV Revolutionary Development Support Directorate were to merge into the new Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development (CORDS). Johnson appointed Komer to head CORDS as a deputy MACV commander, holding the rank of ambassador. Komer flew back to Vietnam with Westmoreland to work out the details of the new arrangement. In early May, the organization was formally announced as NSAM 362 with the approval of Ambassador Bunker.

Even with the president's support, U.S. mission leaders struggled to improve alignment of effort and resolve personality clashes. Komer's remit included supervising the formulation and execution of "all plans and programs, military and civilian, which support[ed] the government's Revolutionary Development program and related programs."[205] CORDS was intended to serve in an advisory capacity within the RVN's pacification program, with CORDS advisors serving alongside their RVN counterparts. This meant a fundamental shift for the RVN Territorial Forces, as Westmoreland shifted them from his J3 (Operations) cell and CORDS established a new Territorial Forces Evaluation System (TFES) to assess the various RF/PF. CORDS also took over advisory responsibility for the National Police, new life development, refugees, Chieu Hoi, RD Cadre, civic action and civil affairs, as well as parts of several USAID programs.

The organizational structure for CORDS followed the MACV HQ system: a civilian served as deputy to the senior U.S. military advisor from the three-star corps down to the district level. The CORDS official had the right to supervise and execute military and civilian plans, including RVN pacification efforts. As with the TFES, CORDS created a Hamlet

Evaluation System (HES) to assess the level of RVN control.[206] The eight core programs prioritized for the remainder of 1967 and into 1968 were: (1) improve 1968 pacification planning; (2) press land reform; (3) revamp police forces; (4) accelerate Chieu Hoi; (5) mount an attack on the VC [political] infrastructure; (6) expand and improve ARVN support for pacification; (7) expand and supplement RD team effort; and (8) increase capability to handle refugees.[207]

It took some time to get CORDS up, running, and fully staffed, and the 1968 Tet offensives would prove a baptism of fire. But it benefited from the beginning from the fact that "the two men [Komer and Westmoreland] developed a working relationship of mutual trust and confidence. Westmoreland permitted Komer wide latitude within the pacification sphere, and Komer deferred to Westmoreland on military operational matters."[208]

Pacification seemed to be properly under way at last, but the war in the countryside continued to escalate as the two sides committed increasing numbers of troops to the fight. Some Vietnam commentators have claimed that the United States started to do the bulk of the fighting as early as 1965, but casualty rates tell a different story. In 1965, 1,369 U.S. troops were killed in action, compared with 11,000 RVNAF troops. In 1966, 5,000 U.S. troops were killed, compared with 12,000 RVNAF troops. In 1967, the United States lost 9,377 troops and the RVNAF more than 12,000—the first year the numbers are in any way comparable. In 1968, nearly 15,000 U.S. troops were killed, compared with almost 30,000 RVNAF troops.[209]

The United States continued to act in an advisory capacity to the RVNAF, even throughout the huge infusion of U.S. ground forces. Senior command in Washington wanted to assign some of the best from the U.S. Army to tactical advisory roles; Westmoreland, however, was adamant that he needed the best officers available for U.S. Army tactical units, not for advisory work.[210] This caused friction with his deputy, General Abrams, who was in charge of the advisory mission, but General Johnson made it clear to Abrams that the U.S. Army took priority.

There were excellent advisors serving in MACV, but it was necessary for senior command to clarify the status of advisory positions to the promotions boards and the like to get high-quality personnel.[211] Over time, there were also attempts to make the advisory positions more attractive with offers of command time, training, extra pay, and so on.[212] None of this, unfortunately, contributed to improved battlefield or pacification performance for the RVNAF. Casualties in 1967 were the highest recorded yet, at least partially due to some of the largest search-and-destroy missions of the war, chiefly against the main forces in "Iron Triangle" and "War Zone C," to the north and northeast of Saigon, respectively.

Operation *Cedar Falls* was the first of these; it began in January 1967 and involved nearly six brigades. It was a classic "hammer and anvil" operation. The United States and ARVN tried to move civilians out of the way

by evacuating hamlets and villages, which only served to alert VC and PAVN units in the region. The operation, which kicked off on January 8, also included RVN units to help with the "hold" phase of the plan. All units began clearance operations via helicopter, river craft, APC, tank, and on foot. VC units engaged the Americans as they came; it appeared to the MACV J2 MACV that some of the main forces had already slipped away from the battlefield.

U.S. forces spent most of January clearing areas, taking bases, and seizing weapons and caches. At the end of January, MACV and ARVN claimed to have cleared the area and destroyed most of the military installations and HQs for COSVN Military Region 4. More than 700 VC, plus some PAVN, were killed; another 500 joined Chieu Hoi and 200 became prisoners. There had been only one significant engagement, in which the United States lost 72 killed and 300 wounded, and ARVN 11 killed and 8 wounded.[213]

Following on from Cedar Falls, Westmoreland ordered a two-division level search-and-destroy mission to clear out War Zone C, which was home to COSVN and the 9th VC Main Force division. The 1st and 25th Division were tasked with clearing the area, an operation that took two months. They planned to launch on February 22, airlifting three brigades to create a blocking position along the Cambodian border and parachuting one of the nine battalions into the blocking zone. Two other brigades would move overland and squeeze the enemy between themselves and the blocking forces to the north.

On February 22, a massive air attack went in against the various blocking position areas, and then the nine battalions started to load up into helicopters and C-130 transports. By the end of the first day, having encountered little resistance, all troops earmarked for the blocking position were in place, including the paratroopers. The two overland brigades moved north on the 23rd. The advance went slowly, due more to terrain than to the enemy. Two ARVN Marine battalions were flown in to support the clearance operations.

After a few days, it was clear that COSVN and main force units, refusing battle, had slipped away. U.S./ARVN troops carried out a series of unsuccessful searches for caches and HQs. However, COSVN had regrouped and, beginning on February 28, launched a series of attacks against the U.S./ARVN lines of communications in War Zone C. In the first attack, a company from the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division was almost wiped out by a main force battalion. The United States responded by redeploying their forces: some went back to their permanent bases, others scoured the area for returning VC and PAVN units. A series of sharp local battles erupted across the secured area, and U.S./ARVN units created a chain of firebases in an attempt to draw the VC and PAVN into battle. There was heavy fighting at several of the firebases, notably GOLD and FSB 14.

After two months, the VC and PAVN had lost nearly 3,000 dead and suffered much damage to the 9th Division, which by May had withdrawn to Cambodia to refit. COSVN had been forced to move much of its supplies and training camps to other locations, some inside Cambodia. The United States had lost 282 men killed.[214] Civic action had followed up the various operations, but many in the countryside still chose neutrality over taking sides. U.S. commanders continued to be frustrated by the fact that the VC and PAVN were still free to decide when battle commenced and when it ended. The deputy commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division, Bernard Rogers, commented, "With respect to the enemy contacted during the two operations, we found most of them dedicated, well-disciplined, persistent, tenacious, and courageous, often displaying more 'guts' than sense. It was sheer physical impossibility to keep him from slipping away whenever he wished if he were in terrain with which he was familiar—generally the case. . . . [T]hus the option to fight was usually his."[215]

The war in northern I Corps also escalated in 1967. General Walt had shifted much of the 3rd Marine Division into Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces, aiming to forestall an invasion. The rising threat in these provinces compelled the whole of I Corps, III MAF, and MACV to focus on reinforcing the area with more troops, which meant removing U.S. troops from ongoing pacification duties. Task Force Oregon was renamed the Americal or 23rd Division and was moved into southern I Corps to allow the 1st Marine Division to move north to Da Nang to further support the 3rd Marine Division. The 1st Cavalry Division was also shifted from II Corps to support the Marines, anticipating the possibility that PAVN was massing for a decisive battle with I Corps.

By the end of 1967, close to 42 percent of the U.S. maneuver battalions were fighting in I Corps.[216] In an attempt to forestall expected PAVN attacks, a major barrier force was created for northern I Corps. One Marine and one ARVN regiment were earmarked to create firebases, minefields, and major outposts (chiefly in the area of Route 9, which ran east to west) to act as a barrier against any attempted PAVN invasion. Bases such as Khe Sanh (a former USSF and CIDG camp) were reinforced and expanded, and 50 percent of all B-52 strikes were concentrated in I Corps territory.[217]

As 1967 came to an end, some U.S. observers were feeling optimistic. RVN elections had been held, and Thieu and Ky had been elected. Some people expressed concern that the elections had been rigged, but many civilians in the RVN who had voted felt that the system was less corrupt than when Diem was running elections. Casualty numbers were rising, but intelligence indicated that the VC and PAVN were also suffering.[218] Pacification was still not as effective as many had hoped, but the establishment of CORDS made it seem possible that things would settle down

and that progress would follow. Two areas of concern remained, over which MACV and the U.S. Embassy had no control: public opinion in the United States and the DRV's plans to break the stalemate.

It was apparent to the U.S. population at the end of 1967 that the Vietnam conflict was unlikely to end any time soon. The rising casualty rates and the ongoing draft to fill active units further alienated segments of the population.[219] President Johnson also had to contend with McNamara, who by the end of 1967 had begun to question the war effort. McNamara called upon the president to initiate negotiations, start pulling out U.S. troops, and allow the RVN to carry the weight of the campaign. It was clear that McNamara had to leave his position as secretary of defense, but he could neither be fired nor resign for fear of the message this would send to the U.S. population. He eventually resolved the quandary by taking a job with the World Bank. Many of the antiwar Democratic candidates, including Robert Kennedy, had hoped they would publicly state their reservations about the war, but they did not.[220]

General Westmoreland was also worried about the issues that were bubbling to the surface in the United States. He stated publicly that he intended to be able to shift most of the responsibility for the war to the RVN in two years' time and to begin withdrawing forces. Privately, both he and President Johnson hoped not to increase numbers for the ground campaign, but refused to acknowledge that in public, for fear that the DRV would interpret it as weakness. Therefore, the MACV and JGS Combined Campaign Plan for 1968 was not significantly different from the 1967 version. The DRV, however, decided to go in a different direction.

In autumn 1967, Generals Thanh, Le Duan, and Giap convened a series of meetings to plan strategy for 1968. They were seeking a decisive victory, via the "General Offensive-General Uprising" of 1968. Thousands of PAVN had infiltrated into the RVN, and the VC were amassing weapons and cadres to carry out attacks in urban areas. Lists were being drawn up of key RVN officials who were to be killed.[221] The two sides were on a collision course for the Tet offensives of 1968.

1968: THE OFFENSIVES AND THE IMPACT

In many ways, 1968 was the turning point in the Vietnam conflict.[222] The United States and RVNAF, after initial setbacks, inflicted heavy damage on the VC and PAVN throughout the country. The RVN survived; the popular uprising anticipated by the DRV never materialized. However, beginning with the Tet offensives, 1968 added up to a strategic defeat for the United States, and hence for the RVN, and dramatically diminished U.S. will and enthusiasm to continue to prosecute the conflict.

U.S./ARVN intelligence had indicated the possibility of COSVN attacks in 1968, but senior U.S. military commanders could not agree on how large the effort was likely to be and where it might fall. In December 1967, Westmoreland sent a message to General Wheeler, predicting that COSVN was preparing to launch a series of significant attacks across the RVN, seeking a notable victory: "I believe that the enemy has already made a crucial decision to make a maximum effort."[223]

Expanded engagement in I Corps by January 1968 included a concerted siege on the USMC firebase at Khe Sanh.[224] Senior leadership decided that it was critical to hold out, anticipating that a major COSVN offensive was most likely to launch in the I Corps region, in which Khe Sanh's position would be of crucial importance. They dedicated massive air support to ensure that Khe Sanh remained secured.[225]

Some MACV personnel were skeptical about this course of action, suspecting that other plans were afoot. Earlier in January, signal intelligence had picked up communications, and major caches of weapons had been found near Saigon and other large urban areas.[226] Lieutenant General Weyand, now II Field Force commander (corps level), met with Westmoreland. He asked to pull many of the U.S. forces in III Corps, who were preparing to carry out a major offensive along the Cambodian border, back toward the major population areas, including Saigon, in response to intelligence indicating that a major attack was about to commence. Westmoreland agreed, and by the end of January, 27 U.S. battalions were within 30 kilometers of Saigon. The RVNAF also redirected some of their forces, placing units along known infiltration routes and approaches to Saigon.[227] Other intelligence coming in to I and II corps, from captured PAVN officers and documents, supported the supposition that something larger was in the works.[228]

The U.S. mission's plans created some tensions with the RVN government regarding the upcoming Tet cease-fire, an annual observance. Westmoreland and his staff, anticipating an attack, asked the JGS to cancel all leave over this period. This request provoked much wrangling, and Washington had to get involved. Eventually U.S. and RVN leadership agreed on a 36-hour cease-fire, except in I Corps and IV Corps (southern Vietnam), where the increase of attacks indicated that a major attack was likely to commence shortly. On January 24, Westmoreland told General Wheeler that attacks countrywide were now more likely, but that the main event would still be Khe Sanh.[229]

The first Tet offensive began on January 30, 1968, when, it is estimated, close to 84,000 VC/PAVN forces attacked 36 provincial capitals, 64[230] district centers, and five of the six major South Vietnamese cities, including Saigon and the important city of Hue. The VC/PAVN occupied some of the capitals, parts of Saigon, and all of Hue for most of a month. During that time, the VC/PAVN lost about 50,000 killed, wounded, and captured,

while the United States lost nearly 2,100 and the RVNAF lost just over 4,000. It is estimated that tens of thousands of Vietnamese civilians died in the first month, and hundreds of thousands more were homeless.[231]

Some of the attacks were very public affairs, particularly the VC/PAVN sapper attack on the U.S. Embassy compound in Saigon. They never succeeded in getting inside or destroying the embassy—there was some heavy fighting, but the sappers were all killed before they could do any lasting damage—but just having mounted a sustained attack was a major public-affairs coup for the VC/PAVN, and images from the fighting sent shockwaves through the U.S. public.

By the 31st, Westmoreland was able to report that the embassy could return to normal functioning.[232] By this point, reports from MACV and the field indicated that the offensive could be contained, that the VC/PAVN were playing against their strengths, and that they were now exposed to direct battlefield engagement with the United States and ARVN. They were also hampered by the failure of the anticipated popular uprising in RVN to materialize. Even COSVN had recognized a few days into the offensive that all was not going according to plan.[233] One report admitted that "we failed to seize a number of primary objectives. . . . [I]n the political field we failed to motivate the people to stage uprisings and break the enemy's oppressive control."[234] However, while this may have been objectively true and obvious to troops on the ground in Vietnam, observers and the general public were seeing a different picture. Many in the United States believed that the VC/PAVN were winning, and that U.S. efforts since 1965 were coming to a crashing end.[235]

As the United States, allied forces, and RVNAF started the counteroffensives that would slowly destroy the VC/PAVN main forces willing to stand and fight, Komer and Westmoreland remained focused on ensuring that pacification efforts would continue alongside to try to seize back the initiative. Komer worked closely with the RVN to ensure that provincial Revolutionary Development plans were being accelerated after the setbacks of late January and February; MACV and Washington DC, after recovering from the shocks of the first two days, awaited the anticipated invasion of I Corps territory.[236]

MACV and III MAF estimated that there were five PAVN divisions in and around northern I Corps and anticipated their attacks in all parts of I Corps. In the event, VC/PAVN forces attacked many of the urban centers, provincial capitals, and district centers in I Corps. They were stopped from entering Da Nang, but an estimated 3,000 VC and PAVN regulars managed to get into and gain control of the old imperial capital of Hue, most importantly the old citadel. Pacification efforts in I Corps dropped off dramatically, owing to the resulting refugee crisis and the widespread destruction of hamlets, villages, and towns. Even the USMC CAPs were stretched, as they were detached and used to defend or take part in some

of the counteroffensives.[237] The fighting in Hue over 25 days is a microcosm of war in Vietnam in 1968.

The PAVN 4th and 6th Regiments (later reinforced by the 5th) were ordered to march from western Thua Thien to take the city of Hue. The two regiments arrived outside the city on the evening of January 30; the 1st ARVN Division was stationed in and around the city. PAVN surprised the defenders, and by daybreak on the 31st, the 6th Regiment controlled more than 60 percent of the citadel and had raised the red and yellow VC flag over it—an act that would have resounding political and military consequences. The 4th Regiment, meanwhile, concentrated their efforts south of the citadel, in the "modern city."

Within hours of receiving word of the attack on Hue, the USMC was shifting reinforcements to support the 1st ARVN Division and to try to control parts of the city. Task Force X-Ray (three battalions plus supporting units and subunits) from Phu-Bai moved north toward Hue. However, before they could come to ARVN's aid, they had to clear out the various VC/PAVN units that had launched attacks in their AO.[238] In Hue itself, PAVN was executing close to 3,000 RVN officials and "loyal" RVN supporters.[239]

The 1/1st Marines were the first to reach southern Hue to support ARVN on January 31, smashing through VC/PAVN road blocks to the south. Intelligence had been universally inadequate; some initial reports indicated only three VC/PAVN companies in the city, but the heavy fighting in which lead elements of TF X-Ray were shortly involved showed that these reports were clearly incorrect. By February 1, it was decided that the Marines would focus on taking back the city south of the Perfume River, while the 1st ARVN concentrated on destroying the PAVN on the north side, in and around the citadel. ARVN attacks were bogged down against PAVN's effective defense, requiring an influx of U.S. Army reinforcements.

The 1st Cavalry Division, having already been redeployed from II Corps to support III MAF, next moved its third brigade to the west of Hue as the U.S. forces gathered themselves in preparation for the counteroffensive scheduled to start on February 3–4 to clear PAVN out of the city. It is interesting to note that, at this stage, the RoE for fire support in the city was quite restrictive in recognition of Hue's historical importance. This restrictive RoE was lifted later in the battle, as the RVN government decided it was more important to clear the city and the citadel as soon as possible to diminish the impact of a "PAVN occupied city."[240]

The fighting for the city and the citadel continued until March 2, with extensive heavy fighting and considerable destruction of the city. RoE tried to limit the damage to civilians and their homes, but urban fighting is by its very nature quite destructive, as it was in this case with

U.S./ARVN troops trying to clear out an enemy who was willing to fight to the death, house by house and sometimes room by room. TF X-Ray lost 140 killed and more than 1,000 wounded; ARVN lost 300 killed and nearly 1,700 wounded; the USA lost 100 killed and almost 500 wounded. It is estimated that between 2,500 and 5,000 PAVN were killed and an unknown number wounded.[241] The fighting in Hue also created over 100,000 refugees.

The fighting during the Tet offensive and in Hue was visible to the U.S. general public on a daily basis via television news broadcasts.[242] They tended to view the offensives as defeats for the United States and the RVN, even though COSVN recognized it was losing many more veterans on the battlefield. Westmoreland's request for more troops during the offensives did not help support the narrative that the United States/ARVN was successfully pushing back the PAVN/VC forces. His request for a further 200,000 troops was leaked to the press in March and caused a political storm. The "peace" candidate Eugene McCarthy had come close to winning the New Hampshire Democratic primary for president, and Robert Kennedy had entered the race for the Democratic ticket. President Johnson announced to the American public on March 31 that he would not seek reelection in the 1968 presidential race.

Westmoreland's request for 200,000 more troops was not granted; instead he received just under 20,000 reinforcements, bringing the total U.S. presence close to 550,000 troops. Many within MACV recognized that they were losing the political message campaign in the United States. General Abrams summed it up at the end of March: "while the enemy failed in RVN, he won in the US. This is manifested by the loss in political support." Komer echoed these sentiments: "despite our efforts, official Washington has totally misread the real situation here. Washington has focused on our own losses, not on the enemy's. It has been swayed far more by the press than by our own reporting. . . . As a result, all too many see cutting our losses as the only way out of a painful impasse."[243]

Toward the end of March, it was announced that in May General Westmoreland would give up his command of MACV and take over as Chief of Staff, U.S. Army. In early April, General Abrams was selected as Westmoreland's successor.[244] Before the transition took place, COSVN launched their second offensive. MACV was aware of their plans, and many of the attacks were broken up before they reached their targets. After a month of fighting, the VC/PAVN units attempted to escape to their border sanctuaries, and it is estimated that close to 30,000 VC/PAVN were killed and wounded in the month of May. Abrams took over in June, as MACV and the JGS consolidated their planning for future offensives and pushed back many of the remaining VC/PAVN. The final COSVN offensive of 1968 occurred in August; as with their previous attempt, the Americans and the RVNAF were ready and forestalled many of their

attacks. A North Vietnamese official history confirms that "because the enemy's situation and our situation had changed we had to fight continually and to concentrate on the cities. In the rural areas we were vulnerable and were strongly counterattacked by the enemy, so our forces were depleted. . . . [W]hen the enemy launched a fierce counteroffensive our weaknesses and deficiencies caused the situation to undergo complicated changes."[245]

Pacification efforts were seriously hindered during the first offensive; more than 500 of the RF/PF and 5,000 outposts were overrun or abandoned. In response to the fighting in the cities, other RF/PF forces were rushed into various cities and provincial capitals. Nearly 6,000 RF/PF soldiers were killed, missing, or had deserted through the fighting, while ARVN was brought in March to deal with the missing Territorial Forces in the countryside. Many CORDS and RD programs were thrown into disarray, but the first offensive had also caused many VCI to expose themselves. As the VC/PAVN were slowly overpowered, many VCI, having been "outed," had to leave as well. By the end of March, many in MACV and CORDS felt overall the situation was improving. However, the new U.S. secretary of defense, Clark Clifford, and his staff were very pessimistic about whether the pacification programs could rebound and, in fact, about the war as a whole. An internal Pentagon report declared that "the enemy's current offensive appears to have killed the program [CORDS] once and for all."[246] This proved to be an overly pessimistic assessment: pacification *had* survived, but at a cost.[247]

The impact of the three offensives of 1968 cannot be understated. While all three were manifestly military defeats for the DRV, they nevertheless used them to strategic and propaganda advantage. General Walt concurred: "there is no question that the Tet offensive, coming after three years of American involvement and years of grinding, patient effort at pacification, was a master stroke of propaganda, despite the debacle in military terms."[248]

MID 1968–71: A ONE WAR STRATEGY? AND "VIETNAMIZATION"

The final years of U.S. involvement in Vietnam were complex and frustrated. As was true all through the conflict, each year was distinct, and context was a key factor. The final years of active U.S. involvement were successful in many ways, but this did not change the United States' ultimate decision to withdraw from the conflict and abandon the RVN to the whims of the DRV. Robert Komer, writing in 1986, recalled the contradictions of this war:

[T]he Tet offensive . . . did force the GVN and ARVN at long last to take some measures as [to] manpower mobilization and some purging of poor commanders and

officials. After Tet 1968, VN performance improved significantly. . . . [T]he enemy's cumulative losses during his Tet and follow-on offensives of 1968 were a major factor forcing him to revert to a protracted war strategy in 1969-1971. Not until mid-1972, almost four years later, had Hanoi rebuilt its forces sufficiently to launch another multi-offensive of any size. By this time it had to be conducted mostly by NVA [PAVN]forces. . . . [I]t had become an NVA war. Another contributory factor was that the pacification program proved far less severely hurt than Washington had prematurely concluded. Instead it entered a period of rapid expansion in late 1968 which continued for the next two years. As a result, the GVN position four years later, by mid-1972, was far stronger than at Tet 1968, despite US withdrawal of almost 500,000 troops.[249]

How did all this come about?

ONE WAR STRATEGY

One of the largest debates during the war concerned a perceived change in strategy under General Abrams. Many authors consider General Abrams to have been a better commander than Westmoreland, since he was able to coordinate the strategy to deal with both main forces and pacification; they[250] believe that Westmoreland failed in Vietnam and that, if Abrams had been put in charge earlier, the outcome would have been different.

This thesis does not hold up well to close scrutiny. As stated in the introduction, the war had entered a different phase by the time that Abrams took command. The enemy also, as the saying goes, "had a vote" in the way the war evolved in the post-1968 period. Finally, with the election of Richard Nixon as president in late 1968, the U.S. involvement changed dramatically. Some historians also claim that only Abrams understood the necessity for the U.S. military to operate as small units and to support pacification, moving on from the large-formation sweeps that characterized the conflict from 1965 to 1967. This thesis does not hold up, either; when looking at the statistics, it is apparent that many of the units operating between 1965 and 1968 were carrying out more small-unit actions and fewer large search-and-destroy missions.[251] In the post-1968 period, many U.S. units were able to operate in small formations, since many of the VC/PAVN forces had been so reduced by losses in the 1968 offensives.[252] Komer described, "the heavy VC/NVA losses in their 1968 offensives, which compelled Hanoi to revert in 1969–71 to a strategy of protracted war. Particularly important, these losses were incurred mostly by the southern Viet Cong who were always the chief opponents of pacification."[253]

Large search-and-destroy missions continued under Abrams; some of these became notorious, such as the Battle of Hamburger Hill. However,

as Westmoreland had before him, Abrams recognized the need to keep the enemy off balance with large sweeps and set-piece battles. Abrams openly emphasized the need to kill as many of the enemy as possible to force him further back into his sanctuaries[254] and, like Westmoreland, grasped the complexity of the conflict: "all elements of allied forces were to be involved in a campaign to destroy the VC infrastructure, guerrillas, local forces, main forces and remaining NVA in country."[255] The way the United States and RVNAF fought in the final years was not a dramatic change, but the way PAVN fought from 1972 until the end was.

PACIFICATION

With the military defeat of the VC/PAVN in 1968, pacification became the object of a new focused effort. The environment had changed dramatically in Vietnam following the VC's 1968 losses, which had revitalized the RVN.

One of the first attempts to recover from the initial offensives in 1968 was the establishment of the joint Central Recovery Committee. It was headed by Ky, Thang served as the Chief of Staff, and Komer served as the American representative on the committee. It coordinated all the government departments, MACV, and U.S. Embassy agencies to support recovery of the country in the aftermath of the offensives, especially in the damaged urban centers.

Another key undertaking was to start rebuilding CORDS in the countryside. The two later COSVN offensives in 1968 not only disrupted the recovery efforts in some areas, but also highlighted positive results, as fewer RF/PF outposts were lost or abandoned. By September 1968, the RF/PF had expanded from 300,000 to 385,000; the RD Cadre had expanded from 35,000 to 50,000; and the National Police, 60,000 to 80,000, with funding from the United States and RVN doubling since 1966. More U.S. advisors were also placed with the growing number of Territorial Forces.[256]

In November 1968, the United States and RVN launched the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC), the end result of much pressure on the RVN to shift focus back to the countryside from the cities. By this time, Komer had been replaced by his deputy, William Colby, who had been working in Vietnam for many years. APC was launched as a focused campaign, with two major outcomes hoped for by Abrams, Komer, and Colby: "they wanted the South Vietnamese to take the initiative and expand [their] control of the rural population . . . [and they] hoped the campaign would help convince critics in the United States that the war was winnable and pacification succeeding."[257] The APC's chief drive was to remove 1,000 hamlets from VC control and bring in the power of the RVN,

through security (Territorial Forces) and governance. President Thieu supported the effort and created a new Central Pacification and Development Council to provide a unified direction.

By the end of January 1969, the APC operation was coming to a close. The RVN and MACV could claim success, as the VC opposition had been quite light and the new local security force, People's Self-Defense Force (PSDF),[258] successfully raised in each of the hamlets.[259] U.S. forces and ARVN were used to destroy any VC or PAVN who remained in the area to threaten the newly cleared hamlets.[260] The end result of APC for General Abrams was, "if we are successful in bashing down the VC and the government can raise its head up, the villages and the hamlets can maintain their RF/PF units and keep a few policemen around and people are not being assassinated all the time, then the government will mean something. . . . [P]acification is the gut issue for the Vietnamese. That is why I think we cannot let the momentum down."[261]

The RVN kept up the momentum. With assessments for 1968 operations still coming in, COSVN launched the Tet offensive of 1969. This time around, it was a resounding defeat for COSVN. Reports estimated that between late February and late March, the VC/PAVN lost 5,000 men per week as casualties, and another 1,000 men as defectors. For APC, the most encouraging news was that the Tet offensive of 1969 had a minimal effect on pacification.[262] The 1969 campaign would be the last major VC/PAVN offensive until 1972, when the dynamics in Vietnam had fundamentally shifted as a result of the Nixon administration's strategy.

As the APC was being assessed, the new Nixon administration was busy preparing its own Vietnam policy. A series of high-level visitors arrived in Vietnam to meet with MACV and senior RVN officials and gather information. One core question from many of the visitors concerned the state of the RVNAF and its ability to carry the war with fewer Americans. As the national security advisor and later secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, stated:

> We recognized from the beginning the uncertainty that the South Vietnamese could be sufficiently strengthened to stand on their own with the time span that domestic opposition to American involvement would allow. Therefore a negotiated settlement has always been preferable. Rather than run the risk of South Vietnam crumbling around our remaining forces, a peace settlement would end the war with an act of policy and leave the future of South Vietnam to the historical process. We could heal the wounds in the country as our men left peace behind on the battlefield and a healthy interval for South Vietnam's fate to unfold.[263]

This plan, known as the Vietnamization phase of the war, was formalized in National Security Study Memorandum 36, a timetable to withdraw U.S. armed forces from Vietnam. The new U.S. policy became

public in June, when Nixon met with Thieu at Midway Island. During this meeting, Nixon announced that 25,000 U.S. troops would be sent home by the end of August, with no precondition from the DRV on pulling any of their troops out. While MACV and the JCS were initially upset with the Nixon administration's plans, they soon recognized that this was going to happen and began to prepare to redeploy U.S. forces from Vietnam.[264]

General Abrams was now left with a strategy that pushed for pacification in the countryside, battlefield improvement of the RVNAF to safeguard Saigon, and a withdrawal plan for more than 500,000 U.S. forces. As the historian Richard A. Hunt stated, "Abrams was placed in a bind: He wanted to use pacification to help win the war; the White House wanted to use pacification to help America withdraw."[265]

COSVN's Resolutions 9 and 14 now focused the core of their efforts against the Territorial Forces and RVN attempts to reimpose their grip on the villages and hamlets. Larger VC main forces were broken up to operate as small units to attack the RVN and CORDS in the countryside. COSVN reported in late 1969, "the Autumn campaign has not met planned results. . . . [T]he enemy . . . has nevertheless fulfilled his most pressing requirements, particularly those of his rural pacification program."[266] The PAVN main forces pulled back to sanctuaries in Cambodia and Laos to lick their wounds and rebuild for the future, as the United States began its withdrawal.[267] As the United States withdrew, more and more battles erupted between RVNAF and VC/PAVN forces, especially in IV Corps or the Mekong Delta. The RVNAF appeared to be holding their own in these engagements;[268] it was the RF/PF who would suffer most of the casualties in the remaining years of the conflict.[269]

"VIETNAMIZATION"[270]

For the RVN to continue to succeed in the countryside and protect what it had gained since Tet 1968, it needed to be able to develop both administrative capabilities and security forces. The core concern affecting the Nixon administration's plan for the future was whether the RVNAF had the ability to defend the state. Nixon and his team had inherited the Johnson administration's Accelerated Phase II Improvement and Modernization Plan, but this only envisioned making the RVNAF capable of dealing with a VC guerrilla threat, supported by a large U.S. residual force still in country to fight the PAVN. The new secretary of defense, Melvin Laird, made it clear to Abrams and Wheeler that keeping such a major U.S. residual force in the country in the long term was out of the question.[271]

President Thieu, hearing these rumors, arrived for meetings with Nixon in Midway proposing a massive expansion of the RVNAF, with heavy

artillery and armor units to oppose PAVN and the VC. General Abrams disagreed with the need for heavy artillery and armor, believing that U.S. airpower and supporting heavy fire platforms would suffice. He was correct that, as long as these capabilities remained in place, they could support an RVNAF that was quite lightly equipped. The question, of course, was how long they would be available to support. In July, General Wheeler emphasized to Secretary Laird that "the resulting structure is not designed to provide the South Vietnamese armed forces the capability to deal with both the full enemy guerrilla force in country and cope with the North Vietnamese forces. . . . RVNAF alone cannot in the near future maintain the integrity of South Vietnam."[272] The debates continued for another year, as Laird pushed the RVNAF to focus on the threat they were already facing, and not a major conventional threat that was only a possibility. Tensions remained high between the JCS/MACV on one side and Nixon's administration on the other.

The U.S. advisory mission for the RVNAF started to take a central role once again as U.S. ground forces began to pull out. After nearly 15 years of advising, most of the advisors were hoping to work themselves out of a job. The Combat Assistance Team was established in 1969; under this model, the number of advisors at the tactical level was reduced to an absolute minimum and their mission changed formally from "advising" to "combat support coordination." The size and role of each team was left up to the regional commanders, based upon the performance of the RVNAF in the area.

Even with effort focused on "working out of a job," the numbers of advisors actually increased from 1968 to 1970. In 1970, there were just under 3,000 advisors serving with ARVN, from the corps to the battalion level, with another 8,000 advisors in CORDS and 2,300 alone in support of the Territorial Forces. The quality of the advisors still varied, and many of the issues that had been reported consistently since 1965 remained unresolved. General Abrams was one of the most vocal critics about the quality of the advisors.[273]

The RVNAF, as part of its preparations for the future, also set out to create a much stronger military training structure. After years of frustration in this area, this initiative was being commended by observers in MACV and DC by 1971. More high-quality U.S. advisors were being assigned to the various RVNAF training establishments, and the JGS began to send highly qualified officers and NCOs to the training establishments as well. In addition, the training programs were rationalized. The RVNAF was a force of nine divisions, plus one airborne and one marine division. There were over 120 "line" battalions, plus 9 marine, 9 airborne, and 20 Ranger battalions. There were now 17 cavalry (armored) squadrons (battalions), 43 medium artillery, and 15 heavy artillery battalions. The Territorials (RF/PF) fielded over 500,000 and the PSDF numbered close to 3 million.

There were also close to 100,000 armed National Police. The CIDG was formally transferred from the 5th U.S. Special Forces Group to the RVN and was renamed the Ranger Border Defense Battalions. There were close to 37 of these.[274]

As the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces continued and MACV worked to prepare the RVNAF for success in the future, planners established a more formalized system of combined operations between RVNAF and the remaining U.S. ground forces.[275] While combined operations had occurred in the past, it had never been fully operationalized and, with the divisions of roles in both forces, some units had never operated with one another. Abrams set out to change this but, as with the war overall, combined operations arrangements were context and situation dependent. The USMC and U.S. Army in I Corps had worked closely with the highly regarded ARVN 1st Division and with the weaker 2nd Division. By the end of 1969, the remaining USMC and U.S. Army units were carrying out area security with Territorial Forces as well as ARVN, and carrying the war to the PAVN sanctuaries in the western parts of I Corps. Similar combined operations arrangements already existed in II Corps as well; their efforts increased in 1969 and 1970, as U.S. Army units and formations worked closely with ARVN and Territorial Forces.

As the United States withdrew and placed ARVN in the forefront in some locations in Kontum Province, the South Vietnamese sometimes struggled to hold the line.[276] Operations such as *Washington Green*, where the 173rd ABN Brigade had been integrated closely with the Territorial Forces in Binh Dinh, had been considered successes, but the withdrawal of U.S. forces showed some cracks in the previously strong defense.[277]

The combined or partnered operations in III and IV Corps were more problematic. In both corps, the RVNAF were consistently rated some of the lowest in the country. Lieutenant General Julian Ewell, II Field Force commander, and the III Corps commander, General Do Cao Tri, announced the Dong Tien (Progress Together) program in June 1969, to "buddy up U.S. and ARVN units to conduct combined operations [that would] . . . maximize their effectiveness of both forces [and] achieve in 2, 3, or 4 months a quantum leap in ARVN and RF/PF performance."[278] General Ewell was explicit with his U.S. commanders: "in planning and conducting combined operations, ARVN units are to remain under the operational control of their own commanders. Combined ARVN and U.S. planning should be conducted. . . . [I]t is essential that ARVN commanders at all echelons continue to exercise operational control of their own units during these operations. . . . [The] whole purpose . . . is to have the ARVN units take over their own independent operations as rapidly as possible."[279] The remaining U.S. units and formations partnered alongside the ARVN and Territorial Forces in their AOs to carry out area security and search-and-destroy missions.

The largest combined ARVN/U.S. effort during this period was the 1970 invasion of Cambodia from II, III, and IV Corps zones. Although space does not permit a detailed discussion of the invasion itself here,[280] the important points to note are that ARVN (48,000) and U.S. (32,000) ground forces carried out a series of attacks into the major PAVN and VC sanctuaries just across the border in Cambodia over the months of April, May, and June. Some of the attacks were short raids, others consisted of occupation of Cambodian territory to support the new U.S.-backed General Lon Nol in his war against PAVN and the Khmer Rouge.

The invasion was largely a success; the amount of supplies captured and the disruption caused to PAVN set the possibility of any main force invasion of South Vietnam back by a few years. All but one PAVN base was destroyed, and PAVN casualty estimates were more than 11,000 PAVN/VC killed, compared with 976 allied troops killed and 4,500 wounded.[281] There were key "Vietnamization" successes as well, with numerous reports praising ARVN performance during the incursions. They were commended for their ability to plan and conduct operations with minimal support from U.S. forces, as well as operating a considerable distance from their own supply bases. Morale also appeared to be on the increase as U.S. and ARVN forces were finally allowed to strike at PAVN sanctuaries. A U.S. journalist reported that "even long time critics concede that ARVN has been operating efficiently and effectively."[282]

Another positive sign was that pacification efforts in South Vietnam continued during the invasion and were able to carry on with minimal ARVN or U.S. main force support. However, battlefield success notwithstanding, the political victory once again belonged to the DRV. Protests against the invasion erupted on university campuses across the United States, culminating in the killings at Kent State University in Ohio in May, and pressure mounted on Nixon to speed up the withdrawal and seek "Peace with Honor." Nixon complied, announcing on June 30: "with American ground operations in Cambodia ended, we shall move forward with our plan to end the war in Vietnam and to secure the just peace on which all Americans are united."[283]

As 1970 drew to an end, there were promising signs that Vietnamization and pacification were working. ARVN was fighting better than it had in the past, although many U.S. commanders still felt that there were fundamental issues remaining and that the RVNAF was "still not ready to stand on their own."[284] The two key issues that had plagued the RVNAF since the mid-1950s—lack of leadership and politicization of the officer corps—had still not been resolved. When General Westmoreland visited South Vietnam in 1970, he reiterated the "need to clean house in the senior ranks of the Vietnamese Army. . . . [There were] many young colonels capable of assuming general officer responsibilities and eager to do so."[285] By the end of 1970, the U.S. 9th, 1st, 25th, and 4th Infantry divisions

had left Vietnam, along with two brigades—close to 200,000 troops altogether.[286]

The next major test for Vietnamization was the Lam Son 719 raid into Laos in February and March 1971.[287] ARVN attacked into two major PAVN base areas, opposite the northern section of I Corps, near Khe Sanh. American forces were only allowed to provide air cover and helicopter support, and American tactical and formation-level advisors were not allowed to cross into Laos, remembering the fallout from the 1970 Cambodian invasion. Some units of ARVN fought very hard and determined battles, while others displayed cowardice in front of the enemy. Overall, PAVN was able to reorganize and inflict damage on ARVN, which withdrew to Khe Sanh in late March after a series of heavy battles.

ARVN senior command had encountered considerable difficulties in organizing both the defense and later the withdrawal of forces from the combat areas. Abrams concluded, "Saigon cannot sustain large-scale cross-border operations . . . without external support."[288] ARVN did succeed in penetrating into the two sanctuaries and causing considerable damage, but the U.S. press coverage portrayed it as yet another defeat, further demoralizing an already war-weary U.S. population that chiefly wanted the war to end.

Even as Lam Son caused issues in the United States, pacification efforts in South Vietnam continued unabated, and many observers claimed progress. The attrition of main forces in the cross-border attacks was having a positive impact on both fighting and pacification efforts inside South Vietnam. One British observer, Sir Robert Thompson, commented on an extreme case of attrition in the countryside: "a famous Viet Cong company (316) in Long An province . . . which in the middle 1960s had been 200–300 strong and a very efficient unit. I was told that it was now down to three men, all of whom were North Vietnamese."[289] A RAND report also highlighted that "attrition is pushing pacification, not vice versa."[290] This point was reinforced by Abrams, Ambassador Bunker, and Colby, but pessimism about long-term success remained: "the South Vietnamese government, for all its improvement, still lacked a solid popular political base; poor leadership and corruption persisted in both the civil administration and the armed forces."[291]

1972–75: THE END

As 1972 dawned, many CORDS and intelligence reports claimed that much of the RVN's population was now under their control. While the RVN administration was still encountering difficulties in spreading its message and reach, security in the countryside appeared to have achieved unprecedented levels of stability. HES reports classified close to 97 percent

of the population as secure or relatively secure,[292] and numerous journalists and advisors were reporting that they could travel to certain districts without military escort. U.S. ground forces were at 158,000, while the RVNAF had grown to over a million troops and the PSDF numbered nearly 3 million. Many of the larger U.S. bases were being handed over to the RVNAF. There were still issues within the RVN, and Ambassador Bunker predicted in early 1972 that the DRV would "mount a major military offensive . . . to prove his public claims that Vietnamization and pacification are failures."[293]

The U.S. advisory mission was also being drawn down; in the spring of 1972, there were just 5,000 advisors in country, and the number of CORDS advisors had dropped to 2,600. MACV reorganized both its advisory and operational mission, transforming into a combined advisory group. Advisors became liaisons and coordination teams for U.S. combat assets still in the country,[294] a role that proved critical in the Easter Offensive of 1972.

The planning for the PAVN Easter Offensive[295] had begun in 1971, motivated by RVN pacification efforts. Le Duan, emboldened by the Lam Son attacks, by reports of U.S. forces withdrawing and a U.S. public whose appetite for war was at an all-time low, thought that the United States might not intervene on behalf of the RVN in the event of an offensive. Leadership in Hanoi wanted to launch an offensive in 1972, to "win a decisive victory . . . and force the U.S. imperialists to end the war by negotiating from a position of defeat."[296] A major debate erupted about when the offensive should be launched; some DRV officials felt that they should wait until 1973, when there would likely be no U.S. troops in country. Le Duan disagreed and called for the attack in 1972, citing the recent troop reductions that Nixon had announced, which would have left minimal infantry troops behind.[297] The timing was set for the dry season of 1972, around March, and 10 of 13 PAVN divisions were moved into military regions 1, 2, and 3, supplied and reinforced for the coming offensive.[298]

MACV and DC were aware that an offensive was in preparation, but they did not know when it might fall. Nixon continued the troop withdrawals, but reinforced air and naval assets in the area, including more B-52s to Guam.[299] The DRV launched the offensive on March 30[300] in a four-pronged attack, chiefly centering on I Corps and the taking of Quang Tri and Hue; III Corps and the taking of An Loc; and the final attack in II Corps, against Kontum.[301]

After a series of close-run battles, chiefly in I Corps, including Quang Tri,[302] the attack toward Hue, and fighting in Kontum and An Loc, the RVNAF began to regain lost ground with the support of U.S. airpower and other combat enablers. U.S. advisors on the ground helped as combat enablers and helped to boost morale; they "stiffened the morale of the ARVN commanders in time of desperate peril."[303] PAVN also failed to

deliver a decisive defeat, or even a focused attack on one front, opting instead for multiple attacks across four fronts. After nearly six months of fighting, Quang Tri was retaken in early September by the RVNAF, and the offensive finally died down. It is estimated that PAVN and RVNAF each lost about 100,000 killed and wounded during this six-month period. Putting aside the collapses of the new 3rd and 22nd ARVN infantry divisions in the opening stages of the offensive, the RVNAF was widely commended for its fighting ability. The Vietnam historian and observer, Douglas Pike, declared that "ARVN troops and even local forces stood and fought as never before."[304]

Despite these accolades, leadership remained an unresolved problem. General Abrams became quite bitter and fatalistic about the performances of various senior ARVN commanders, noting gloomily that "we've done what we can."[305] The Nixon administration, clearly looking for the exit, proclaimed that Vietnamization was working and that handing the war over completely to ARVN forces would be fine. Secretary Laird called for a massive reduction in the remaining numbers of advisors, to 2,500 in total,[306] and the administration played down the role of U.S. advisors and airpower in the defeat of the offensive in an attempt to demonstrate that the RVNAF was ready to take control without U.S. advisory support.

PAVN had been dealt a significant blow by the offensive, but two key issues remained: the RVNAF had not been able to force PAVN completely out of all the areas of the country they had occupied; and pacification efforts had been partially derailed by rerouting forces to forestall PAVN. There had been a drop in the HES in areas where PAVN marched through, which was not surprising. The Territorial Forces fought very well in some areas and encountered difficulties in others. However, unlike in 1968, the vast majority of Territorial Forces were able to defend their positions. It must also be noted that the main aim of the PAVN invasion was not destruction of the pacification effort, but the destruction of ARVN. What the offensive did bring about was another massive refugee problem and destabilization in areas of the country where PAVN was able to reestablish control and create logistic bases for the future.[307]

While all this was ongoing, the last stages of the U.S. involvement were also rolling out. In June, Abrams was replaced by General Weyand as COMUSMACV, while Abrams took over as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army from Westmoreland. Weyand was told that the final withdrawals would begin and that by early November, there would be just over 13,000 U.S. personnel in South Vietnam in total.[308]

During the summer of 1972, secret peace talks between the United States and the DRV began again in Paris.[309] By October, the United States had dropped its demand that all PAVN forces must withdraw from RVN territory, and the DRV had dropped its demand that Thieu must be removed and a coalition government formed. The DRV needed the

United States to stop its bombing and blockade operations, which were impeding the DRV's ability to reinforce the south and undertake any economic development. The final agreement called for the removal of all U.S. troops from South Vietnam, the return of all U.S. and RVN POWs, replacement of equipment, respect of the territory and neutrality of Laos and Cambodia by both sides, and establishment of a National Reconciliation and Concord to help organize future elections in the RVN. The practical reality of this agreement was that PAVN was not forced to withdraw its 150,000 troops still occupying territory in South Vietnam. Neither Thieu nor the VC was happy with these terms, and both felt that they had been left out of the negotiations. After a series of political wranglings in November and December, Nixon launched the "Christmas Bombings," B-52 strikes against the DRV from December 18 to 29 to compel the DRV to sign the cease-fire—which they did on January 23, 1973.[310] It went into effect on January 28, and over the next 60 days, all remaining U.S. forces, advisors, and MAVC staff withdrew, as well as all allied armies still in country. MACV stood down on March 29, and from that point, the United States was not allowed to provide any more advice to the RVN.[311]

As the United States prepared to leave the RVN, PAVN and COSVN prepared for the final campaign.[312] It is estimated that close to 100,000 PAVN entered the occupied areas of the RVN throughout 1973, with the old U.S. base at Khe Sanh serving as a major transit point and defended area. Nixon had pledged support in the form of airpower, but even had the DRV violated the cease-fire, the administration did not follow through on this promise. The emerging Watergate scandal took most of the press and public attention away from Vietnam, and in July 1973 Congress voted to stop all funds for any U.S. military activity in the two Vietnams, Cambodia, or Laos.[313]

Fighting erupted in various places across South Vietnam throughout 1974, as the RVNAF tried to hold areas that they controlled and PAVN attempted to seize more territory, especially in I Corps. RVNAF units were being bled white in some locations, while PAVN was reinforced with men and material. U.S. supplies and aid to the RVNAF were reduced dramatically every quarter by the U.S. Congress from the end of 1973 on. One example of this was the supply of artillery to II Corps: in 1973, ARVN artillery batteries were firing close to 100 rounds a day. By mid-1974, they were restricted to fire four rounds. The lack of funds and equipment had a major impact on morale and corruption within the RVNAF; some commanders took to selling diesel and other goods, and desertion levels soared to new heights. A senior U.S. officer recalled that "in 1974 the fight went out of [RVNAF]; they sensed that the RVN was doomed."[314]

In 1975, PAVN launched the final offensives against the RVN,[315] knowing that the United States, mired in the post-Watergate political crisis, would do nothing to stop them. The RVNAF's performance was

inconsistent; in some places, it put up a stiff defense and in others, it simply disintegrated. It is difficult to provide a comprehensive assessment of the RVNAF's final days, depleted as they were in terms of men and material.[316] As one observer noted, "unit for unit and man for man, the combat forces of South Vietnam repeatedly proved themselves superior to their adversaries. Missing . . . were the inspired civilian and military leadership at the highest levels and the unflagging American moral and material support."[317] By April 30, 1975, the RVN collapsed, and it was all over.

CONCLUSION

The conflict in Vietnam was singularly complex, encompassing the full spectrum of conflict, and it is difficult to lay blame for the defeat on one specific strategy or commander, as many pundits have tried to do since 1975. There were many reasons for the defeat in South Vietnam, and the principal one that many pundits fail to consider is the enemy's perspective. The DRV, COSVN, PAVN, and VC were dedicated to a total victory, whatever the cost. The opening of the archives in Vietnam has provided important new information shedding light on their side of the story, and a simple truth, if there is one in this complex campaign, is that the RVN, even supported by the United States, could not match the drive and dedication of the DRV and COSVN to achieve their goals.

In his concluding remarks on Vietnam, Robert Komer highlights both the complexity of this war, and the cruel realities:

> the final irony is that the war ended as we Americans had thought it would begin—with a series of conventional NVA attacks employing artillery, tanks and even air power. It was the collapse of the regular ARVN forces, weakened by the withdrawal of the US shield and congressional cutbacks in US military aid, which brought the 20 year conflict to its ignominious end. By this time the indigenous Viet Cong insurgency had largely petered out. Pacification had not failed; indeed it had become a qualified success at long last. But it too was swept away in the final debacle.[318]

GLOSSARY

APC: Accelerated Pacification Program

APCs: Armored Personnel Carriers

ARVN: Army of the Republic of Vietnam

CAP: Combined Action Program [or Platoon]

CG: Commanding General

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

CIDG: Civilian Irregular Defense Group

CINCPAC: Commander in Chief Pacific Command

COMUSMACV: Commander US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
CORDS: Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support
COSVN: Central Office for South Vietnam
DRV: Democratic Republic of Vietnam [North Vietnam]
HES: Hamlet Evaluation System
JCS: Joint Chiefs of Staff
JGS: Joint General Staff
KMAG: Korean Military Advisory Group
MAAG: Military Assistance Advisory Group
MAB: Marine Amphibious Brigade
MACV: Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MAF: Marine Amphibious Force
NVA: North Vietnamese Army
OCO: Office of Civil Operations
PAC: Pacific Command
PAVN: People's Army of [North] Vietnam
PF: Popular Forces
PROVN: Pacification and Long-term Development of South Vietnam
PSDF: People's Self-Defense Forces
RD: Revolutionary Development
RF: Regional Forces
RoE: Rules of Engagement
ROKA: Republic of Korean Army
RVN: Republic of Vietnam [South Vietnam]
RVNAF: Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SACSA: Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities
SEATO: South East Asia Treaty Organization
TAOR: Tactical Area of Responsibility
USA: United States Army
USMC: United States Marine Corps
USN: United States Navy
USSF: US Special Forces
VC: Viet Cong

NOTES

1. Thousands of monographs and articles have been written on this period of Vietnam's history, and it would be impossible to list them all. For those interested in pursuing the subject in more depth, there are a number of excellent sources for

further study. The single best source for primary material now available online is the Texas Tech University Vietnam Archive. The Center for Military History (CMH) Web site also has many excellent resources, including PDFs of all the official histories written to date (2014). The CMH Web site also has the MACV histories and advisory volumes listed below as PDFs, as well as copies of the Indo-China monographs that were written by senior ARVN commanders. The USMC History and Museum Division has compiled a number of official histories as well, available on their Web site as PDFs. In terms of key texts providing more in-depth analysis and debate, see the Further Reading section under "United States—Vietnam."

2. See Dale Andrade, "Westmoreland was Right," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 2 (2010), for a very good introduction to the polarized debates of recent years.

3. Graham Cosmas, *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Withdrawal*, *1968–1973* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2007), 410.

4. This chapter will cover the 1954–75 period only. One of the best recent books on the 1945–54 period is Fredrik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 2012).

5. Jeffrey Clarke, *Advice and Support: The Final Years the US Army in Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, 1987), 7.

6. A recent excellent study of Lansdale's role in the Philippines can be found in PDF form online: Major Andy Lembke's Art of War thesis, http://usacac.army.mil/Cac2/cgsc/carl/download/csipubs/ArtOfWar_AmericaAndThePhilippines.pdf

7. Quoted in Mark Moyar, *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41.

8. See Rufus Philips, *Why Vietnam Matters* (Annapolis, VA: Naval Institute Press, 2008) for an in-depth insider's point of view of this critical period.

9. Moyar, 56–59.

10. Ibid., 68–69.

11. The overarching term to use for combined ARVN, air force, navy, and paramilitary forces, when applicable, is the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces or RVNAF.

12. See Ronald Spector's *Advice and Support: The Early Years* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1983) for an in-depth discussion of the MAAG effort during this difficult period.

13. Clarke, 7.

14. See Spector, 320–25 for more detail.

15. See the work of Lien-Hang Nguyen, *Hanoi's War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), for much more detailed discussion of the North Vietnamese strategy in dealing with Diem's regime and security forces.

16. Quoted in Spector, 301.

17. These southerners would provide the cadre of the future National Liberation Front's "main force" elements: the 324th, 325th, and 350th Divisions.

18. Spector, 312–14. See full chapter for more details.

19. See Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), for an in-depth study of the role of the NLF in a specific district and the impact of the war in the countryside. See also the early work of Douglas Pike, *Viet Cong* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966).

20. Melvyn Lefler and Odd Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume II: Crisis and Détente* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); see in particular Fredrik Logevall's chapter in Lefler and Westad, "The Indo-China Wars and the Cold War, 1945–1975," 292.

21. Moyar, 83–84.

22. Spector, 329.

23. See Spector, 329–31 and Moyar, 85–89.

24. Moyar, 88–89. See quote on page 88 that specifically states that the power of Diem's government and security forces was too much for the VC to oppose.

25. Spector, 335. It is ironic that the communists were complaining about terrorism, since this was one of their main tactics in trying to separate any support for RVN from the rural population.

26. Quoted in Spector, 335.

27. Quoted in Moyar, 89.

28. See Spector, 332.

29. See Nguyen's *Hanoi's War*, chiefly the chapter "The Path to Revolutionary War," for much more detail regarding the position of Le Duan and attempts within the DRV to take control of the campaign in the south.

30. Moyar, 89–95.

31. Ten-point manifesto, December 1960, quoted in Pike's *Viet Cong*, 359.

32. *RAND Vietnam Interviews*, ser. AG, no. 543, also quoted in Moyar, 437.

33. Memo, Commander-in-Chief Pacific to JCS, April 27, 1960, "Counter-insurgency Operations in South Vietnam and Laos," quoted in Spector, 361.

34. Spector, 344–7.

35. There is some validity to this assertion: the U.S. effort in the Philippines was a purely advisory role. The enemy, the Huks, came from across the Philippine population, whereas in Malaya the vast majority of the insurgents were ethnic Chinese and hence easily able to identify and focus on. The British also acted in an advisory capacity in some of the provinces in Malaya, but overall it was quite a different campaign.

36. He did not object to the formation of the rangers, but felt they needed better training.

37. Spector, 368–9.

38. Clarke, 14.

39. Moyar, 123.

40. See the many writings of Karl Hack for much of the recent work on the Malayan Emergency. The author of this chapter also lays out the roles of the British Army during the Emergency in a book chapter, "Lost and Found in the Jungle" included in Hew Strachan's, *Big Wars and Small Wars* (London: Routledge, 2005).

41. Spector, 369–71.

42. Spector, 371.

43. Kennedy followed Lansdale's advice and replaced Durbrow.

44. Moyar, 122–4.

45. Nolting would disagree with Diem on many occasions, but kept his opposition or disagreements private. See Moyar, 130.

46. Moyar, 130.

47. Clark, 14.

48. Moyar, 134.
49. Ibid., 129.
50. They had discussed the possible use of U.S. troops in Laos to support the noncommunist government fight against the Pathet Lao.
51. Quoted in Moyar, 136.
52. Moyar, 136–43.
53. Ibid., 142–5.
54. Michael Hennessy, *Strategy in Vietnam: The Marines and Revolutionary Warfare in I Corps, 1965–1972* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 1997), 19–22.
55. Quoted in Hennessey, 22.
56. Ibid.,, 23.
57. Graham Cosmas, *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation, 1962–1967* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2005), 22.
58. See below for more description of this organization.
59. Clarke, 14. See Chapter 2 of *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation, 1962–1967*, for a very detailed analysis of the formation and the various politics regarding the chains of command and jurisdictions.
60. See Cosmas, 25–27.
61. Ibid., 41–44.
62. Sir Robert Thompson, a senior official from the Malayan Emergency, headed the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam.
63. Moyar, 156–59.
64. See Francis J. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies: The Special Forces in Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1973), for an in-depth discussion of the creation of the CIDG, transfer to the USSF, and their efforts in creating more troops. The complete transfer took until July 1963 to complete. See Graham Cosmas, *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation, 1962–7* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2005), 78–79.
65. Quoted in Moyar, 184.
66. However, the NLF and the VC were still increasing their numbers during this period.
67. In 1962 alone, the number jumped from 2,600 to 11,500.
68. Moyar, 145–55.
69. Pike, *Viet Cong*, 350–1.
70. See Cosmas's reference to a DIA report from 1962 on page 72 highlighting that the VC openly controlled 10 percent of the countryside and had influence in another 60 percent; also Moyar, 165–66.
71. Quoted in Pike's *Viet Cong*, 359.
72. See Moyar's descriptions, 169–81.
73. Cosmas, 83.
74. Quoted in Cosmas, 86.
75. See David Toczek, *The Battle of Ap Bac* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 2001) for an in-depth analysis of the battle.
76. Moyar, 188–9.
77. Ibid., 189.
78. For a wider discussion of these debates, see Mark Moyar, *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006),

194–205 (plus footnotes), Neil Sheehan's *A Bright Shining Lie*: *John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (London: Pimlico: 1998), and David Toczek, *The Battle of Ap Bac* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 2001). I will leave it to readers to delve deeper and decide where the truth may lie.

79. See the description of the VC marching through the countryside after the battle in Pike's *Viet Cong*, 131.

80. Although it is interesting to note U.S, Lieutenant General Dave Palmer's later comment on this period: "[the ARVN's] cautious tactics were, in spite of the very sincere exhortations of the U.S. advisors, precisely the same that any American commander would have used after the U.S. troops were committed in 1965. Moreover, the American's fate for accepting human losses in lieu of calling for firepower to do the job would have been the same as that of a South Vietnamese commander—removal from command." Quote in Moyar, 192.

81. Quoted in Cosmas, 88.

82. ARVN corps commanders were in charge of both internal security and combat operations against any VC main forces.

83. Clarke, 13. The strategic hamlet program was moving forward, but there were many reports where the deficiencies were highlighted, especially in terms of the administration and the political parties involved.

84. Quoted in Moyar, 208–209.

85. See Moyar, Cosmas, and Philips for more detail.

86. Buddhist priests carried out public acts of self-immolation for the world's media to record. Images of priests burning themselves became iconic images of the war overall.

87. There is still quite a bit of debate regarding this issue. See Cosmas and others for more detail.

88. Quoted in Moyar, 233.

89. Cosmas, 91–93.

90. Ibid., 95–96.

91. Cosmas, 96–97.

92. Moyar, 244. An interesting point was raised by General Taylor when he stated: "we need a strong man running this country. We need a dictator in time of war and we have got one. I seem to recall that in our civil war we also had a dictatorial government." Moyar, 245.

93. Kennedy had sent the fact-finding mission because he felt he was not getting an honest assessment from Ambassador Lodge. Moyar, 253.

94. Kennedy was interviewed on air with Walter Kronkite and spoke openly about some of the issues he had with Diem's government.

95. Cosmas, 97–101.

96. Moyar, 255–6.

97. There were others who had similar views within the Kennedy administration.

98. Quoted in Cosmas, 101.

99. Cosmas, 103.

100. Quoted in Moyar, 273. See Moyar's analysis on page 270–3 for a more detailed description of the final hours of Diem and his brother, Nhu.

101. Cosmas, 106.

102. Robert Komer, *Bureaucracy at War: US Performance in the Vietnam Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 139.
103. See Cosmas and Clarke for more detail regarding this period.
104. For an exhaustive history of the forces, see Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong, *Territorial Forces* (Washington, DC: US Army Center for Military History, 1981).
105. Cosmas, 119–20. See also H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 115–6 for more details on the planning that occurred with the JCS.
106. Clarke, 94–95.
107. Cosmas, 139.
108. This chapter does not allow enough space to allow for a full discussion of Westmoreland and his big unit strategy. Please see the works of Lewis Sorley and Dale Andrade for more information on the debates that are still ongoing.
109. Cosmas, 140–1.
110. Clarke, 13.
111. Cosmas, 120–1.
112. Quoted in Nguyen, *Hanoi's War*, 73.
113. See Nguyen, 71–75 for more detail.
114. Cosmas, 122.
115. Nguyen, 73–75.
116. Captain Roger Donlon.
117. Cosmas, 192.
118. Quoted in Moyar, 335.
119. Clarke, 43.
120. See Cosmas, 143–4 for more details on the planning and execution of Hop Tac.
121. See Clarke 85–93 for more detail regarding this difficult debate.
122. See Chapter 6of McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty* for a very detailed review of the lead-up and decision-making process to this event. This chapter does not allow for an in-depth discussion of this key event, but there are many other sources that do so.
123. Quoted in Moyar, 313.
124. Many U.S. citizens also favored military action against the DRV. Moyar, 315–6.
125. Cosmas, 159 and 169–73. See also McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty*, Chapters 11–12 for more details.
126. Moyar, 356–7.
127. See Cosmas, 194 for more detail regarding the Binh Gia.
128. Quoted in Nguyen, 74.
129. Quoted in Cosmas, 179.
130. Quoted in Nguyen, 75.
131. Quoted in Cosmas, 202.
132. John Carland, *Stemming the Tide: May 1965–October 1966* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 2000), 16–18.
133. Moyar, 368.
134. Carland, 19–21.

135. Nguyen, 76.

136. Quoted in Cosmas, 230. Ironically, this last coup was successful, and both Thieu and Ky would be the representatives of the RVN until just before the end in 1975.

137. Quoted in Moyar, 407.

138. Quoted in Cosmas, 240.

139. See Moyar, 409–11 and Cosmas, 241–4 for more details.

140. Moyar, 411.

141. One of the most controversial debates occurred at this time, regarding the need to call up the reserves to support the effort. President Johnson refused to do so, fearing a congressional and public debate regarding the war. See Cosmas, 244–5 and Moyar, 414–5 for more specifics.

142. The Philippines and Thailand also provided troops.

143. As he had been during the debates regarding the call-up of reserves, the President was not entirely truthful with the U.S. public—a decision that would create problems in the future when people began to question the escalation. See questions from the press to Johnson on July 28, Moyar, 415.

144. MACV Directive 525-4, quoted in Clarke, 106.

145. U.S. forces had been trained in pacification duties and had extensive supporting doctrine for their mission. See Andrew Birtle, *US Army and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942–1976* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2007), for a much more nuanced discussion of the preparation, training, and doctrine in pacification for all USA units. See also Michael Hennessey, *Strategy in Vietnam: The Marines and Revolutionary Warfare in I Corps, 1965–1972* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 1997), for more detail on the USMC thinking about pacification training and doctrine.

146. RF/PF forces would be given the primary responsibility for securing areas so that both ARVN and U.S. forces could be used in clearing operations. ARVN would support the Territorial forces when needed and the U.S. forces would be used in quick reaction forces to support when needed. Clarke, 107.

147. Quoted in Clarke, 107.

148. There is debate about whether the Australians fit in well with the 173rd, since they had a different military culture. While some of the arguments advanced are valid, it is not as black and white as some commentators have made it out to be. See Ian McNeil, *To Long Tan* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1993) and Bob Breen, *First to Fight* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988) for more details.

149. Carland, 28–32.

150. Cosmas, 250–1; also see Carland, 113–47 for an in-depth discussion of the Ia Drang valley campaign.

151. The command structure in I Corps and Vietnam in general was quite complicated. See Cosmas for a full discussion of how this developed.

152. See Lewis Walt, *Strange War, Strange Strategy: A General's Report on Vietnam* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1970) for an interesting personal account of the war.

153. Westmoreland recalled in his memoirs: "I had no wish to deal so abruptly with General Walt that I might precipitate an inter-service imbroglio." See William Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1976), 166.

154. Quoted in Michael Hennessy, *Strategy in Vietnam: The Marines and Revolutionary Warfare in I Corps, 1965–1972* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 1997).

155. Many U.S. Marines had some experience in the small wars of the 1920s and 1930s, while others had experienced the conventional battles of the south and central Pacific as well as Korea. See Hennessy for more details of some of the relevant debates.

156. Quoted in Hennessy, 78.

157. 1st Marine Division arrived in 1966.

158. See John Shulimson, *US Marines in Vietnam: The Landing and the Build-up* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, 1978), 69–83, for specific details of the operation.

159. Walt, 69–70.

160. See Shulimson, 133–8 for more details on the start of the program.

161. Walt, 112.

162. Even Westmoreland was complimentary of the program: "the Marines achieved some noteworthy results, particularly with one of the more ingenious innovations developed in South Vietnam, the Combined Action Platoon. . . . [A] lthough I disseminated information on the platoons and their success to other commands, which were free to adopt the idea as local conditions might dictate, I simply had not enough numbers to put a squad of Americans in every village and hamlet." *A Soldier Reports*, 166.

163. Walt, 77.

164. Clarke, 123–4.

165. For an in-depth study, see Brig. Tran Dinh Tho, *Pacification* (Washington DC: US Army Center of Military History), 1977.

166. Richard Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 36–37.

167. Nguyen, 76 and see 73–76 as well.

168. Nguyen, 73–76.

169. My latest research project involves examining the battlefield performance of U.S. and ARVN forces across three provinces and over the course of the war in order to consider some of these issues in depth.

170. Quoted in Cosmas, 257–8.

171. The RVN also restructured the program at this time; as noted previously, the RVN pacification programs were put under the command of General Thang.

172. Hunt, 37–44.

173. See Clarke's Chapter 7, "Revolt in I Corps" for an in-depth discussion of this issue.

174. Westmoreland, 211.

175. Lieutenant General Creighton Abrams was one of the officers who wrote the report.

176. Hunt, 73. See also Komer's book, *Bureaucracy at War*, for more details regarding his thinking.

177. Hunt, 73.

178. This issue had already been debated, in 1963 and 1964, when Westmoreland had offered to manage the effort.

179. Quoted in Cosmas, 358. See also Hunt, 82–85 and Thomas Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1981), for more details.

180. Hunt, 85.

181. Cosmas, 399–400.

182. See Eric Bergerud, *The Dynamics of Defeat: The Vietnam War in Hau Nghia Province* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), for a detailed analysis of 25th Division's campaign in Vietnam.

183. See Carland's Chapter 14 for more details on the complexity of the war for the 1st Infantry Division.

184. He would go on to be II Field Force Commander (Corps level), COMUSMACV and Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army.

185. Quoted in Carland, 337.

186. Bergerud, 155.

187. Westmoreland felt that the division had done well, but understood that Deputy Ambassador Porter was wary of the apparent success. See Westmoreland, 208.

188. Quoted in Bergerud, 160.

189. See Carland's Chapter 15for more details on the 25th Division's efforts in 1966.

190. While the Marines were trying to carry out the war in I Corps, they also had to contend with the "I Corps Revolt" in the spring and summer.

191. See the various USMC official histories for more details regarding CAP. One of the best personal accounts was written by Bing West, *The Village.*

192. Walt, 138.

193. It was estimated that more than 2,000 PAVN were infiltrating per month into I Corps.

194. See Jack Shulimson, *US Marines in Vietnam: An Expanding War* (Washington, DC: USMC History and Museums Division, 1982), Chapter 10, for a very detailed account.

195. Quoted in Shulimson, *Expanding War*, 176.

196. Hennessey, 98.

197. Walt, 139.

198. "RVNAF will have the primary mission of supporting Revolutionary Development activities, with priority in and around the National Priority Areas and other areas of critical significance. . . .The primary mission of the US and FWMAF [Allied forces] will be to destroy the VC/NVA main forces, base areas, and resources and/or drive the enemy into the sparsely populated and food scarce areas . . . Although RVNAF is assigned the primary responsibility of supporting Revolutionary Development and US/FWMAF are assigned the primary mission of destroying the main VC/NVA forces and bases, there will be no clear cut division of responsibility. RVNAF General Reserve. . . .will conduct unilateral and participate in coordinated and combined search and destroy operations. US/FWMAF will continue to provide direct support and implicit aid to Revolutionary Development activities." Cosmas, 401.

199. Komer secret report, "Improving ARVN Effectiveness," December 22, 1966, Personal papers.

200. Nguyen, 79–80 and Dale Andrade, "Westmoreland Was Right," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 2 (2010), 161–3.

201. Quoted in Cosmas, 406.

202. Ibid.

203. The massacre at My Lai being a well-known issue.

204. Quoted in Cosmas, 410.

205. Hunt, 89–90.

206. Both HES and TEFS were subjected to ongoing scrutiny and debate throughout the remainder of the war.

207. Westmoreland, 215–6; Komer, 118–21; Clarke, 211–2; and Hunt, 90–100 for more detail. Over the course of CORDS, countless pamphlets and guides were published on all aspects of pacification. The author has many of these and they are worth the read, if you can track them down at the National Archives and other archives.

208. Cosmas, 362.

209. See Table 14in Clarke, 274. From 1969 until 1974, the RVNAF lost 2 to 20 times as many as the United States.

210. There were exceptions to this. Many U.S. advisors who served with the ARVN General Reserve and alongside the ARVN Special Forces, LLDB, and the Ranger units had served multiple tours and been decorated, and were promoted upon return to U.S. units and formations.

211. This was an ongoing issue for the U.S. Army in Iraq and Afghanistan.

212. Clarke, 236–8.

213. See George MacGarrigle, *Taking the Offensive* (Washington DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1998), Chapter 6, for more details.

214. See MacGarrigle, Chapters 7 and 8, for more details, as well as Bergerud.

215. 1st Infantry Division, After Action Report, Operation Junction City, personal papers.

216. Cosmas, 423.

217. See MacGarrigle, Chapter 16; Hennessy, 119–24; and Gary Telfer, *US Marines in Vietnam: Fighting the North Vietnamese* (Washington, DC: USMC History and Museum Division, 1984), for more detail.

218. Research into archival material also indicates serious debates in North Vietnam at this time about strategy, prompted by increases in casualties. Many in the DRV felt that a point of stalemate had been reached. See Ngyuen, *Hanoi's War*, for more details of the debates.

219. See Cosmas, 441–5 for an interesting analysis of how MACV attempted to deal with the public relations campaign.

220. Cosmas, 462.

221. Nguyen, 80 and Cosmas, 461–69.

222. The stated aims of the DRV and COSVN at the end of 1967 for the Tet offensives ("to secure a decisive victory in a relatively short time") were never met. Victory was not achieved until 1975 after much more loss for the DRV and COSVN. See Ang Cheng Guan, *Vietnam: The Anti-US resistance War for National Salvation, 1954–1975: Military Events* (Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House), 100.

223. Quoted in Cosmas, *MACV The Joint Command in the Years of Withdrawal, 1968–1973* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 2007), 35–36.

224. Westmoreland reiterated that Khe Sanh was going to be a focal point for PAVN in his memoirs; see 314–5.

225. See Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 39–40 and, for an extensive analysis, Jack Shulmison, *US Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year, 1968* (Washington, DC: USMC Historical and Museums Division, 1997), Chapter 4.

226. Westmoreland confirmed that captured documents indicated preparations for a major offensive across South Vietnam. See Westmoreland, 313–4.

227. Cosmas, 50.

228. See Westmoreland, 316–8 for more detail on the bits of intelligence that were coming into MACV about a possible major VC/PAVN offensive.

229. Cosmas, 52. The siege of Khe Sanh would last for 71 days; Hennessy, 132.

230. Hennessy claims 72 of the 245 district centers; 133.

231. Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 59.

232. See Westmorelannd's account on 323–6.

233. See the intelligence reports and files that are listed in Cosmas, 64–65.

234. Quoted in Westmoreland, 332.

235. There are too many accounts and newspaper reports reflecting this perception to list here; this thesis is not a new one and is generally acknowledged as an important factor in events and decisions during this period.

236. Cosmas, 69–70.

237. Hennessey, 132–3.

238. See Shulimson, *Defining Year 1968*, for greater detail of the confusion and the attempts to move forward to support the 1st ARVN Division, 169–71.

239. Hunt, 136.

240. Shulimson, 177–82.

241. For a full account of the fighting in Hue see Shulimson, 183–224.

242. There were more than 600 journalists in South Vietnam at this time. See Peter Braestrup, *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington*, 2 vols (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977) for extensive analysis of the impact of the media.

243. Quoted in Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 88.

244. Westmoreland recommended Abrams to the president as the best choice; 323.

245. Quoted in Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 116.

246. Quoted in Komer, *Bureaucracy*, 146.

247. Hunt, 136–43.

248. Walt, 170.

249. Quoted in Komer, 147.

250. Lewis Sorley has been the historian who has been most closely associated with this thesis.

251. See Dale Andrade. "Westmoreland Was Right: Learning the Wrong Lessons from the Vietnam War," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 2 (June 2008), 145–81; as well as Hunt's Chapter 14, "One war or business as usual," for more detail on this key debate.

252. What was consistent during both time periods was that the VC/PAVN were able to decide when battle commenced and ended.

253. Komer, 151.

254. See Andrade, Westmoreland, 164–6.
255. Ibid., 166.
256. Hunt, 144–54.
257. Hunt, 193.
258. By 1970, there were over 2 million.
259. Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 119–21. See Hunt's Chapter 12, "The Impact of the APC" for a more extensive discussion and debate.
260. See Hunt's Chapter 11, "Abrams in Command: Military Support of the APC" for a more detailed discussion of the multiple support operations carried out by both United States and ARVN.
261. Quoted in Hunt, 193.
262. See Hunt, 218 for a detailed analysis of losses in Tet 1969 versus Tet 1968, especially in terms of outposts abandoned or lost: 477 in 1968 and only 8 in 1969. The battlefield had changed.
263. Quoted in James Willbanks, *Abandoning Vietnam: How America Left and South Vietnam Lost Its War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 13.
264. See Hunt, Chapter 13, "New Directions"; Willbanks, 5–20; and Cosmas, 141–55 for more detail on this very contentious issue and planning.
265. Hunt, 213.
266. Quoted in Willbanks, 58.
267. Hunt, 218–9.
268. See William Colby, *Lost Victories* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), for a detailed assessment of the RVN ability to stem the VC in the countryside.
269. Hunt, 253.
270. See Willbanks, 40–42 for an important discussion of the derogatory meaning of this term for many within the RVN and RVNAF. As noted above, the RVNAF had borne the brunt of the casualties of the war since 1954.
271. See Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, quote from Laird to President Nixon, March 13, 1969, for the specific tone and outlook.
272. Quoted in Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 157.
273. Clarke, 368–73. See the full chapter for more details on the various debates, as well as Willbanks, 32–40.
274. Clarke, 379–81.
275. The issue of unified allied command in the field remained a major issue up until the last days of U.S. ground forces.
276. Clarke, 391–401 and see Cosmas, 254–70 for more detail.
277. See the analysis by Hunt, 224–6.
278. Quoted in Clarke, 409.
279. Quoted in Clarke, 410. See also the analysis by Willbanks, 54–56.
280. See Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 279–310 for a much more detailed discussion of the invasion and the planning behind it.
281. Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 302.
282. Quoted in Willbanks, 84.
283. Ibid., 86.
284. Quoted in Clarke, 422.
285. Quoted in Willbanks, 89.
286. Willbanks, see Tables 5 and 6.

287. See Willbanks, 94–121; Clarke, 472–6; and Cosmas, 311–39 for much more analysis and discussion. Willbanks also has a new book on the operation expected to be published in 2015.

288. Quoted in Willbanks, 112.

289. Robert Thompson, *Peace Is Not at Hand* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1974), 85.

290. Quoted in Cosmas, 270.

291. Cosmas, 269.

292. Willbanks, 122 and other reports.

293. Quoted in Hunt, 255.

294. Willbanks, 123–4.

295. As with the previous offensives, a full analysis of this important engagement is beyond the scope of this chapter. Please see Dale Andrade, *America's Last Vietnam Battle: Halting Hanoi's 1972 Easter Offensive* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001).

296. Quoted in Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 348.

297. Only the 196th Infantry Brigade remained in country. Hunt, 255.

298. See Willbanks, 123–5 and Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 348–9.

299. See Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 349–56 for a wider discussion of the U.S. preparation for the air campaign.

300. For more analysis, see Andrade, but also Willbanks, 126–62; Cosmas, 356–79; and Clarke, 481–90.

301. Willbanks, 127.

302. Quang Tri fell to the NVA in April.

303. Quoted in Willbanks, 159.

304. Ibid., 151.

305. Quoted in Clarke, 487.

306. Ibid., 488–9.

307. Hunt, 255–7. Colby declared that pacification "essentially did the job it was supposed to—deprive the enemy of any population base. The last six months of attack have in my view been a recognition by Hanoi that they had lost the people's war and found it necessary to go into a soldier's war." Quoted in Hunt, 257.

308. Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 371–9.

309. The background to and complexity of these talks does not permit discussion in any great detail here.

310. See Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 381–4; Clarke, 490–6; and Willbanks, 163–86 for more details on the negotiations and the debates.

311. See Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 384–400 for more details on the specifics of the drawdown of all U.S. and MACV personnel.

312. For a very detailed discussion of the final months in South Vietnam, see George Veith, *Black April: The Fall of South Vietnam, 1973–1975* (New York: Encounter Books, 2012).

313. Cosmas, *Withdrawal*, 401–4.

314. Quoted in Willbanks, 207. See also 204–6 for more details on the shortages and supply issues.

315. See Willbanks, Chapters 9 and 10, for a more detailed description of the end of the RVN.

316. The defense of Xuan Loc by the 18th ARVN Division was one of the most outstanding performances of any ARVN unit. Interestingly, throughout most of its history, it had been one of the worst performing divisions in the RVNAF order of battle.

317. Quoted in Cosmas, 405–7.

318. Komer, 154.

CHAPTER 8

"One-Sided COIN": A Politico-Military Study of the Rhodesian Bush War, 1966–80

Edmund Yorke

You cannot win a war like this purely through military means. The military is merely there to maintain law and order and to provide a conducive atmosphere for political development.
—Lieutenant General Peter Walls, Commander, Rhodesian Armed Forces[1]

The guerrillas only require the mass of the population to be passive. We, to win, require the mass of the population to be actively in support of us and not passive. We are at a severe disadvantage here.
—1969 speech by Allan Savory, "rebel" Rhodesian Member of Parliament[2]

World opinion, international economics and Great Britain's international economic interests dictated what would prevail. Neither paternalism nor loyalty to kith and kin would come first to the UK in the future. Rhodesia ignored and avoided these warnings . . . this was no more than deceitful politics and the deliberate avoidance and denial of reality . . . we were deliberately, stubbornly and culturally unprepared to combat an insurgency within our nation.
—Brigadier John Essex-Clark, ex-Rhodesian Staff Corps[3]

I wanted to step up the use of the bayonet. That's the most effective propaganda—the bayonet. You can't divorce propaganda from action; you can't promote something in a vacuum. You see, hearts and minds are conditioned very much by what happens militarily.
—P. K. Van der Byl, Rhodesian Minister of Information[4]

INTRODUCTION

The political and military history of the Rhodesian Bush War, 1966–80 has been the focus of a plethora of literature over the past three and a half decades. While the majority of these, often eminent studies have focused on the tactical and operational aspects of this conflict,[5] few have attempted to analyze it as part of a broader and more complex, integrated internal *and* external political *and* military perspective.[6] This chapter will attempt to redress this perceived imbalance in the Rhodesian Bush War historiography. By selectively examining key political and military policies, events, and phases of the conflict, it will demonstrate how the persistent political myopia of the ruling Rhodesia Front government, the "COIN executor," not only fatally undermined, indeed, betrayed their own white constituents—not least the military establishment that bore the brunt of this truly tragic and costly bush war—but, above all, how it persistently neglected the "hearts and minds" of a majority, disenfranchised African population that was reluctantly, relentlessly, and brutally exposed to the realities of an overtly racial war. Of all the postwar irregular campaigns, this war, it will be further argued, represented one of the most spectacular examples of a grossly imbalanced "one-sided" COIN campaign, whereby military imperatives were consistently allowed to override the political, economic, and social needs of the local population.

The analytical template or *raison d'être* for this study both reflects and draws upon the broad findings of several key and pioneering post-World War II academic studies, notably those authored by Thompson, Kitson, Galula, and Nagl.[7] All have repeatedly stressed the need to minimize the role of security forces and the paramount and vital importance of winning over the "hearts and minds" of indigenous peoples. Their evolving principles have included the clear political aim of establishing and maintaining a free, independent, and united country with political and economic viability, respect for the rule of law, and the prevention of excesses by either side: an integrated civil and military intelligence and military and police strategy aimed primarily at defeating political subversion as the cause of insurgency rather than the insurgents themselves, to include development and reconstruction and, finally, maintaining the security of bases essential for any long, drawn-out campaign. Rhodesian government policy will also be selectively and retrospectively measured against the 10 current principles of COIN adopted by the British Army in 2009, which were themselves principally derived from these theorists. They are: primacy of political purpose, unity of effort, understanding the human terrain, integrate intelligence, secure the population, neutralize the insurgent, gain and maintain popular support, operate in accordance with the law, learn and adapt, and prepare for the long term.[8]

POLITICAL BACKGROUND, 1890–1966

From the very outset of European occupation in 1890 and especially after the granting of quasi-political autonomy to a Rhodesian government after 1923, successive white Rhodesian governments, to varying degrees of culpability, had chosen to ignore political reality in regard to promoting the political, economic, and social rights and development of the majority African population. Africans were largely excluded from the franchise and two crucial Privy Council decisions and Land Acts implemented in 1918 and 1930, had confirmed the expropriation of the most fertile agricultural and productive mineral areas by white farmers and mining conglomerates. This was carried out in the face of a growing African proto-nationalist movement boosted by the experience of two World Wars and the demands of returning African servicemen.[9] The rapid expansion of an African-educated elite after 1945 had also stimulated nationalist aspirations, not least those of future ZANU [Zimbabwean African National Union] leader and president of an independent Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, who had benefited from both the support of local Rhodesian mission schools and the higher education opportunities provided by, for instance, Fort Hare University, South Africa and as well as other liberal British/European universities, notably the London School of Economics.

The violence perpetrated against whites during the Mau Mau disturbances of 1952–60 in colonial Kenya and the Congo crisis of 1960–61, rather than being interpreted as a catalyst for radical internal political change, served only to further entrench white opinion in Rhodesia. Demonstrations by the supporters of three emerging African nationalist leaders, Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe leading ZANU, and Joshua Nkomo leading the Zimbabwean African Peoples Union (ZAPU), provided ammunition for a growing right wing backlash from Rhodesian political groups that saw the granting of universal suffrage that incorporated full African enfranchisement as a recipe for anarchy and disaster.

The political turning point for the future of Rhodesia was signified by the election of the new, rabidly right wing Rhodesia Front (RF) party to power in December 1962. This new government dominated by hard-line white supremacists such as P. K. Van der Byl and Desmond Lardner-Burke and led by farmer and ex-RAF pilot Ian Douglas Smith, made a future armed conflict with emerging African nationalist parties inevitable by pursuing a deeply flawed primary political aim of racial domination that flew in the face of universal human rights and democratic norms established by the United Nations in the wake of the World War II. As J. K. Cilliers confirmed, its agenda was deeply flawed from the start: "Since its inception the party had been committed to the entrenchment and maintenance of white supremacy without the involvement of a distant colonial mother."[10]

Indeed, the earlier failed attempts by Britain, her erstwhile "distant colonial mother" to set up a Federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland in 1953 as a means of facilitating eventual majority black rule in the region, had been a primary catalyst to the emergence of the white separatist Rhodesia Front Party. By 1964, the advent to power of a deeply unsympathetic British Labour government, intent on imposing black majority rule and already enjoying close links with Rhodesian African Nationalist leaders, combined with the growing internal African nationalist pressure, proved to be the tipping point for secession. On November 11, 1965, Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front government declared its unilateral independence from Britain, a process known as UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence). Representatives of a white minority population of barely 300,000 had decisively signified its determination to dominate a black majority population numbering over 6 million. Like many others at home and abroad, the British MP, Evelyn King, was not slow to ridicule the long-term political and military folly of this extraordinary coup by the Smith regime: "It seems ludicrous, but, with an effective [white] population smaller than Bournemouth you run a country over twice the size of Britain, man an army, an air force and, now, defy Britain, the Commonwealth and the rest of the world."[11] Former Rhodesian prime minister, Lord Malvern, was more scathing: "Surely they (the RF) have the wit to learn—if they can learn anything—that what a revolting minority can do, a revolting a revolting majority can do better."[12]

Certainly from the perspective of the banned African opposition, notably ZANU, principally led by the detained Reverend Sithole and Secretary-General Robert Mugabe, and ZAPU, led by the similarly detained Joshua Nkomo, UDI was effectively a declaration of racial war. Already, after constant repression of its activities, ZANU had sent, in September 1963, the first five members of its newly established military wing, ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army), overseas for military training. Its future military effectiveness was, however, already compromised by growing rivalry with ZAPU's military wing, ZIPRA (Zimbabwe's People's Revolutionary Army). By 1962, ZAPU, also in response to continued repression, had earlier also proclaimed its "call to arms" and commenced military training. As Flavia Paradza, a schoolteacher from Chibi affirmed: "We had tried to negotiate for a settlement. That had failed, so we then had to resort to an armed struggle."[13]

The Rhodesian conflict can be conveniently divided into three broad but distinct political and military phases. During the first distinct phase of what might be termed a "hollow victory" lasting from 1966 to 1971, the Rhodesian regime, while achieving remarkable military successes with respect to its COIN campaign, patently neglected—despite dire warnings from within—to either consolidate, build on, or even exploit this firm security foundation; in short, it consistently failed to make any

significant or meaningful political concessions to the indigenous population. During the second phase of the crisis lasting from around 1972 to 1977, the Rhodesian "political chickens" came home to roost as their key allies deserted them, the insurgents adopted a far more effective political and military strategy, and the Rhodesian authorities, only reluctantly offering limited strategic-political concessions such as at the Geneva and Victoria Falls talks—and only prompted principally under massive South African and American pressure—were decisively and irrevocably pushed on to the defensive. The final phase of the crisis in 1978–80 witnessed the collapse of the Smith/Muzorewa interim administration, politically doomed by its own wholly inadequate and exclusive franchise/election arrangements that excluded their "enemy constituency." It exposed and confirmed the overall and profound political failure of the Rhodesian COIN campaign, so graphically signified by the virtual collapse of the Rhodesian war economy and a massive social meltdown that culminated in a large-scale white exodus.

RHODESIA'S "HOLLOW VICTORY," 1966–71

Most academic sources agree that the date April 28, 1966—significantly still celebrated in present day Zimbabwe as "the Second Chimurenga" or "Liberation Struggle Day"—represented the formal start of hostilities of the Rhodesian Bush war. Near Sinoia, after murdering a white farming couple, three teams of ZANLA insurgents were decisively defeated by Rhodesian security forces. Thirteen of the fourteen insurgents were either killed or captured. Over the next five years, the Rhodesian forces would score success after success over the inexperienced and ill-trained ZANLA and ZIPRA insurgents.

With war effectively declared the political survival of the Smith regime ultimately depended not only on the long-term strength and capability of its internal military and economic establishments but also on the effectiveness of the international and particularly British, South African, and American responses.

From the perspective of its military capability, the Rhodesian government forces were not only clearly outnumbered but also severely overstretched. In the words of the Rhodesian military historian, Dr R. J. Wood: "It meant that less than 1,000 regular troops were [initially] available to defend Rhodesia's 390,757 square kilometers or 150,871 square miles, roughly 1.6 times the size of the United Kingdom and slightly larger than the state of Montana."[14] The Rhodesian air and land forces had also suffered from the impact of the earlier dissolution of the Central African Federation—Britain's scheme in the 1950s to unite and democratize its three colonies of Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland—with the

significant loss of aircraft, pilots, and skilled and experienced manpower from the CAF armed forces. Nevertheless, this frontline force, of which the Rhodesia Light Infantry were the bedrock, was supplemented by support units of up to 4,000 strong comprising such units as the white-officered Rhodesian African Rifles and a squadron of the Rhodesian Special Air Service (SAS), modeled on its British counterpart. Experience and astonishing adaptability compensated for lack of numbers in this early stage of the conflict. Many were veterans of the Malayan, Kenyan, and Aden campaigns and their experience undoubtedly played a key role in the early victories over ZANLA and ZIPRA insurgents. In support, there were also eight battalions of territorials and reservists of the Royal Rhodesia Regiment. The Royal Rhodesian Air Force (RRAF) was also not to be underestimated, fielding seven squadrons, flown and serviced by 2,000 regulars. Additionally, Rhodesia benefited from the support of a police force of 7,000 regular black and white British South Africa Police (BSAP) including a paramilitary support unit and by a volunteer Police Reserve of 30,000 men and women of all races. Initially, these forces proved to be an easy match for the comparatively small, ill-trained, and inexperienced insurgent units, often only a few dozen strong, which penetrated Rhodesia's borders during the first five years of the bush war. Up to 30 major attacks were destroyed or thwarted during this period. It was a key factor in encouraging and determining the intransigence of the Smith regime and its pursuit of a profoundly imbalanced, one-sided counterinsurgency in which minimal effort was made to win the support of its majority African population.

Moreover, Rhodesia could initially rely on close security and military support from two political allies, colonial Portugal and apartheid South Africa. After uncovering evidence of the close military cooperation of the African National Congress (ANC) with ZANLA and ZIPRA, South Africa readily supplied significant ground and air support forces while Portugal could provide border security from its adjacent colony, Mozambique. Politically and economically, Rhodesia's survival prospects also appeared promising in this early phase of the conflict. Mining, tobacco, and maize production was sustained at peacetime levels, helped again by a very favorable geopolitical situation in which its two key allies, apartheid South Africa and Portugal, sustained and protected local and international market access via the South African/Rhodesian border town of Beitbridge, and Mozambique transit routes. The Smith regime was soon rapidly lulled into a sense of false security. Smith and his supporters were also able to skillfully highlight the Communist threat to Africa to beneficial effect, winning the support of conservative states and lobby groups abroad.

It was a delusion unfortunately reinforced by the profound failures or weaknesses of the international response to the Rhodesian crisis. The United States was too bogged down in the Vietnam quagmire to

seriously engage and the United Nations was largely emasculated by divisive Cold War politics with the USSR already overtly supporting ZIPRA and China backing ZANLA. But it was, in particular, the decision of Prime Minister Harold Wilson's Labour government *not* to use force to suppress the Rhodesia rebellion that proved critical. Aware of Portuguese and South African support, the logistics problems, and the kith and kin issue—by which senior British Army commanders had already warned him of the unwillingness of some senior units to fight against white Rhodesian troops (with whom some even had family connections)—Wilson perhaps naively opted for the less politically divisive and cheaper option of economic sanctions. But Britain's chronic economic weakness probably proved to be the decisive factor. In the words of R. Goode, a political analyst:

> Formidable logistical problems, the kith and kin factor and negative advice from military commanders helped shape the decision but, underlying all else, was the economic and parliamentary crisis which gripped Britain at the time. For a brief moment, Wilson seemed to believe indirect measures would achieve the objectives. Sanctions would galvanise an effective opposition to the rebel regime in Rhodesia and Britain would be able to work with a reconstituted moderate government.[15]

It was a decision of great naivety, as economic sanctions quickly proved to be a miserable failure. Despite, for instance, the British Royal Navy's much publicized sanctions-busting "Beira patrol," the blockade of the Mozambique port of Beira, both South Africa, principally via the land route of the Beitbridge, and Portugal, via numerous coastal ports, provided ready access for the import of Rhodesia's all-important oil supplies. British vacillation had other unforeseen implications. The abject failure of the British government to directly intervene and crush this "white rebellion," finally convinced the disillusioned nationalist leadership of the necessity of unilateral action and of the imperative need to use armed force to achieve their dream of liberation.

British policy was rapidly reduced to several political initiatives starting with Wilson's ill-fated bilateral talks conducted with Smith aboard the Royal Navy ships, "Fearless" and "Tiger" in the late 1960s. Smith, buoyed up by recent military successes and the clear failure of international sanctions, adopted a hard-line posture that showed no interest in even considering the adoption of *any* of Wilson's six principles and thereby balancing what was already a purely coercive-based counter-insurgency campaign. In the words of the Rhodesian intelligence chief, Ken Flower, chief of Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Organisation, the Rhodesia Front was "riding on the crest of a wave, having won the economic war and apparently won the guerrilla war."[16] These principles, which originated mainly from Wilson and his cabinet and which were later fully endorsed by the United Nations were: first, unimpeded

progress to majority rule; second, guarantees against retrogressive amendments to the constitution; third, an immediate improvement in the political status of the black population; fourth, progress toward ending racial discrimination; fifth, constitutional proposals that are acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole; and, finally, no oppression of the majority by the minority or the minority by the majority. The impasse over the Rhodesian nonacceptance of any of these principles largely reflected the problem of the highly personalized nature of the Rhodesian political leadership with a short-sighted naturally stubborn Smith far too dominant and far too closely aligned to the most extreme members of his cabinet. In the words of Ken Flower:

> the talks foundered not only on the collective rigidity of the Rhodesian regime's ideological position but equally on the inherent strengths and weaknesses of Ian Smith's character . . . he appeared strongest when saying no . . . he would delay decisions until there was absolutely no alternative but to make up his mind . . . his concept of negotiations was not-to-negotiate but to leave it entirely to the other side to make concessions.[17]

The inability of the Smith regime to seriously consider mild progressive reform for its indigenous African population, even in the form of adherence to point 4 of Wilson's principles was an ominous portent of the future and for the conduct of what would become a one-sided COIN campaign that ignored any significant concessions to African welfare and security. Nevertheless, within the Rhodesian establishment itself there were several leading voices of dissent even at this early stage of the war. Flower himself submitted a paper to Smith in 1968 arguing for African political advancement as an overconfident Smith drafted a "retrogressive" constitution in preparation for his infamous 1969 declaration of a Rhodesian republic, in which white rule would be further entrenched:

> The subject with which we are concerned is the developing trend towards separation of the races in Rhodesia and all that this implies; the exploitation of differences rather than similarities; the growth of fear—the Africans' fear of apartheid and the Europeans' fear of the black masses through loss of contact . . . these trends will destroy the Africans' confidence in Europeans . . . leading to a security situation where Black and White become opposed in physical conflict . . . I cannot say how long the erosion would take, nor how serious it would be—much will depend on the final political solution but I must sound a note of warning here and now that cracks are beginning to appear in the edifice and that if we lose the confidence, trust and mutual support of the African there can be only one result: sooner or later the building will collapse.[18]

Several other leading Rhodesian political and military figures also voiced their criticism of the regime's further swing to the right under the

new republican constitution and its continual all-out reliance upon one-sided counterinsurgency tactics during this early period of "hollow victory." In 1969, after retiring from his position as army commander, Major General "Sam" Putterill attacked the government for producing a constitution that would deny the Africans any political future and force them into militant action. Smith, demonstrating again his distance from both local and international political realities, swiftly denounced his comments as "despicable" and further castigating him for his "extremist leftist views." At public meetings his assertion that the war could not be won by force alone and that "the ingredient that is missing is a positive dynamic program designed to win the loyalty of all people" was howled down by RF thugs. When he further criticized the Smith regime for failing to take advantage of the current Rhodesian military dominance by "building up African support through an imaginative policy," he was again denounced as a "communist" and "traitor" to Rhodesia.[19]

On the internal political front, Rhodesian MP Allan Savory actually resigned from the Rhodesia Front in 1969 to speak publicly on the theme that the war was political, and therefore required political, not military solutions. Causing a stir by deploying, for the first time in the Rhodesian Parliament, the term "guerrilla" instead of "terrorist," Savory went on to suggest that guerrilla leaders should be invited to a constitutional conference. A furious Smith predictably attacked the suggestion as "the most irresponsible and evil (statement) I have ever heard."[20] Ken Flowers succinctly summed up the dilemma facing Rhodesian reformers at this time: "Men such as Putterill and Savory, who publicly declared their opposition to the political trend and its impact upon the war, and those of us in official circles who privately expressed our views in favour of liberalisation were faced time and time again with total intransigence on the part of the RF and their followers."[21]

During this early apparently "victorious" phase of the war, such critical voices were easily quashed by the extremely confident leaders of the new Rhodesian republic. As Wood confirms:

> They were . . . good years for Rhodesians. They were winning all the battles and countering the sanctions. They were assisted in their efforts by ZANU's and ZAPU's proclaimed adherence to Marxism; this gave credibility to the Rhodesian government's anti-Communist stance, which struck a chord in the United States and elsewhere, particularly among the conservative Arab states and Iran.[22]

PHASE 2: CRISIS, 1972–77

At the start of 1972, the Smith regime was still riding on the crest of a wave. The British-led and sponsored Pearce Commission found that the 1971 settlement proposals between Smith and Alec Douglas-Home, the

British foreign secretary, which left white political power still largely entrenched, was unacceptable to the African majority. This left Smith unperturbed. As intelligence chief Ken Flowers observed:

> The verdict of the Pearce commission, made public in May that year, had caused him neither disappointment nor defeat. Government propaganda had long since prevailed over fact and no one in authority was prepared to encourage disillusionment or mention the possibility of defeat in a game which had taken a new and dangerous turn. Most of the electorate by this time were unable to discriminate between fact and fancy, or were so confused as to have lost all powers of discrimination, and their leader appeared as one who had assumed a cloak of infallibility.[23]

The delusion had even more heavily infiltrated the Rhodesian military establishment with incoming commanders, while professionally equal to their retiring or serving colleagues, tending to be politically overcommitted to the RF.

By the end of 1972, however, there were clear signs that the Rhodesian war effort was starting to falter, as larger numbers of better trained ZANLA and ZIPRA insurgents began to enter the country and their leaders devised new "revolutionary" strategies—in the case of ZANLA firmly embedded in Maoist principles—designed to exploit the political vacuum left by an increasingly isolationist Rhodesian regime that was still predominantly and fatally dependent upon a purely military solution to the war. The ZANLA leadership led the way. As Noel Mukona recalled:

> In 1969 it was decided to operate silently . . . We worked underground, training, stocking equipment and regrouping inside the country. Special Branch could not find out what was going on and that we were preparing for a continuation of the struggle. Much contact was sustained with the local population to review the terrain . . . In July 1972 ZANU called together all its forces and met in the bush in Mozambique and reviewed the situation. We were satisfied that the preparations were enough and that enough arms and food had been stashed in the bush and that we could restart the onslaught.[24]

Moreover by the early to mid-1970s under this new strategy, both ZANLA and ZIPRA had made great strides in winning domestic legitimacy in the more politically neutral tribal trusts lands. ZANU political operatives successfully infiltrated these areas, skillfully invoking Chaminuka, the spirit of the Shona national prophet of the 1896 resistance era. He was allegedly reached through a medium claiming to be the reincarnation of Nehanda, a powerful priest of the period. ZANLA guerrillas, by cultivating this alliance of traditional and new authority, and sharing similar goals, sought the "retrieval of lost lands and lost autonomy." By further observing the ancestral prohibitions, the guerrillas

"were transferred from 'strangers' into 'royals' from members of lineages resident in other parts of Rhodesia into descendants of the local Mhondoro with rights to land."[25] By these means, "the authority of the ancestors was tapped to provide legitimacy to armed resistance and violent insurrection and the pact between guerrillas and peasants began invariably and unthinkingly to refer to the guerrillas as *vasikana* and *vakomana*, our 'daughters' and our 'sons'."[26] Similarly, but less comprehensively and successfully, ZIPRA, with its high proportion of more urban-based Ndebele support networks, was able to exploit the memory of the last Ndebele independent ruler, Lobengula, as a potent alternative symbol of resistance. As Norman Makahole, a bus conductor in Plumtree recalled:

> I really believed the guerrillas were on a task that was left by our forefathers here, because they wanted equality in the races, not that one should take a minor role, inferior to the other. So I saw these girls and boys to be finishing the work that was started by our ancestors.[27]

This is not to contend that such transfers of loyalties to either Mugabe or Nkomo were by any means peaceful. Terror, assassination, and intimidation were widely used against both alleged collaborators (notably traditional chiefs and headmen) and waverers, and matched that perpetrated by elements of the Rhodesian security forces; it was to become a truly "dirty war on both sides." As Tembo student Chimedza recalled, night meetings or *pungwes* with the "boys from the bush" could be intimidating, with force often applied:

> Some people were refusing to go to the pungwe. Because they were afraid of meeting the soldiers, for of course they would be shot. But you could not miss a pungwe. The comrades would send someone to fetch you. I was helping the comrade and sometimes I had to force people to go . . . we held sticks for them.[28]

Moreover, the responses of different areas, if only driven by reaction to such tactics, were complex and widely varied as Norma Kriger's groundbreaking study of the Mutoko district, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*, reveals with significant divisions of allegiance occurring within the Zimbabwean peasantry both during and after the war.[29] In fact, the Smith regime may have missed a great opportunity to politically capitalize on the allegiance of the predominantly peasant-based African "middle ground" during these earlier stages of the war when it was in a more militarily and economically dominant position and "when the guerrillas had to contend with a still powerful settler state" . . . which would explain the early "guerrillas" reliance on cultural nationalist appeals and their scant utilitarian appeals. "Some," Kriger postulates, "might argue that the guerrillas' failure to establish liberated areas and offer utilitarian incentives

[e.g. development projects] disqualifies it [as Mugabe often claimed] from being included as a revolution."[30]

Regardless of these arguably missed opportunities, the military implications of this new insurgent strategy, relying far more heavily on local intelligence and studiously avoiding the earlier larger-scale head-on and disastrous confrontations with the Rhodesian security forces, were soon apparent. In the early hours of December 21, 1972, after a prolonged lull in the fighting, Flower's prediction of "a new and dangerous turn" in the bush war became horribly apparent when ZANLA insurgents both successfully attacked a white homestead in the Centenary district and ambushed reinforcements, causing significant casualties. It confirmed Smith's statement earlier that month when, in a highly significant radio broadcast delivered on December 4, he forecast the beginnings of a military crisis: "The situation is far more serious than it appears on the surface, and if the man in the street could have access to the security information which I and my colleagues in government have, then I think he would be a lot more worried than he is today."[31]

It had been a rare reality check for the Smith regime and if there was ever a time for a limited move toward some political liberalization by the Smith regime to win over this vital African middle ground or even some embryonic attempt to redress the balance of an overall rigid policy of "one-sided COIN," this was certainly one of several opportunities missed. Instead, barely more than a month later, Smith made a second national broadcast in which, while attempting to calm his white constituency, he displayed his usual combination of ignorance and obduracy. On January 18, 1973, while again recognizing and confirming the gravity of the new military threat, he belittled its deep political significance:

> There have been some unusual developments over the past few weeks and as facts and trends are now emerging, I would like to put you in the picture as far as I can without breaching our security requirements. The terrorist incursion in the northeast of our country has developed in a manner that we had not previously experienced and as a result we have to face up to a number of serious problems . . . for some months now these terrorists have been operating in this area, quietly and methodically undermining the local population. They have done this in a number of ways. Firstly, through intimidation at the point of the gun; secondly they found a few witch doctors of doubtful character and of little substance, and succeed in bribing them to their side. These were then used to good effect in misleading local tribesmen into accepting that the terrorists were worthy of their support. I am sure that I do not have to inform you how easy it is to mislead these simple, gullible people who still believe in witchcraft and the throwing of bones . . .[32]

As Martin and Johnson, leading British and Canadian journalist-historians observe, by this statement Smith "displayed the very simplicity and gullibility he charged Africans with . . . By calling them witchdoctors,

Smith displayed the ignorance common to so many whites in Africa who are incapable of differentiating between the various facets of indigenous society. Nor did he apparently understand the inspirational legacy of mediums like Nehanda and Chaminuka whose names, at the time he was speaking, had been given by the guerrillas to two new sectors of war in the northeast."[33] As J. K. Cilliers, a Rhodesian counterinsurgency expert also wryly observed, in what was to become a classic understatement, "when the campaign began in 1973 it seemed that the Rhodesian government was not yet convinced of the political character of the threat facing it."[34]

Over the next four years, from 1973 to 1977, to deal with this new military crisis, Smith adopted an ostensibly more balanced COIN strategy. His "carrot and stick" approach balancing tougher coercive measures—notably new draconian laws and (from 1974) relentless cross-border strikes against guerrilla bases and training camps located in the Front Line States (neighboring African states supporting the Rhodesian insurgent groups) of Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana—with embryonic talks with designated moderate African leaders, notably Bishop Muzorewa's ANC party, remained severely imbalanced. In reality, the internal and internationally focused political talks conducted during this "crisis phase" were an almost total sham. In the words of Martin and Johnson:

> It was the same old obdurate Smith harking back to yesteryear and trying to dictate the acceptability of what had already been rejected as totally unacceptable by the Africans, which in turn meant that Britain had no justification for pursuing the matter . . . His tactics were to seek alternative groups to the fighters to negotiate with and, over the years, Muzorewa and the Chiefs, Nkomo, Sithole, Chikerema, and others were lured into this trap, with the result that their political reputations suffered. By playing on nationalist ambitions and rivalries, Smith was able to keep them divided and continue to rule while undermining the efforts of the guerrillas by raising false hopes of a settlement.[35]

Internally, the Smiths regime's response to the new insurgent offensive was an almost unrelenting combination of repression and coercion. Of these, the most controversial was the "protected villages" (PV) policy, a crude attempt to emulate the Malaysian model successfully deployed by Britain as an integral part of its COIN policies against Communist insurgents during the earlier Emergency of 1948–60. It was a direct consequence of the new insurgent offensive. As Dirk du Ploy, district commissioner at Chipinga confirmed, "The effect of the war was to bring our work in the rural areas to a near standstill—no, I'd have to admit it, our administration to a halt." The terrorists just took over the TTL's (Tribal Trust Lands). Then the government, in its wisdom, instituted the "protected villages program."[36] Under this policy, thousands of African villagers in the TTLs were

often forcibly removed from their traditional homes into government-designated areas, which the insurgent leadership predictably termed "concentration camps." Between 1973 and 1978, around 750,000 people were moved in this way. With neither the political will nor the financial resources to act as incentives to the dislocated and dispossessed villagers cajoled into this scheme—unlike Malaya where a far better-resourced Britain was able to offer both large-scale economic development projects and future political independence to the indigenous population—it was a veritable propaganda gift to the insurgent movements. As Ian Beckett confirmed: "Given the punitive nature of resettlement, it is, perhaps, little wonder that the winning of hearts and minds left much to be desired."[37] Moreover, this policy, designed to separate the insurgents from the people, was often ineffective, since weakly guarded PVs were often vacated at night or even penetrated by insurgents for political meetings. As David Chikwana, a resident of Chiweshe protected village bitterly recalled: "They put us behind the wire, they said to protect us. But they were not protecting us; they were treating us like animals. That's why we wanted to meet with the boys. They said they were our liberators."[38]

Paralleling these measures was a whole raft of repressive legislation, notably the infamous 1975 Indemnity and Compensation Act (made retroactive to December 1, 1972), whereby police were given wider powers of interrogation of suspected "terrorists" and to, for example, restrict the amount of crops and cattle held by villagers to prevent them supplying insurgents and to impound property—measures often accompanied by great brutality. The Act was roundly condemned by legal authorities outside and even inside Rhodesia, especially as it provided for immunity for security forces if acts had been done in "good faith." After recording numerous acts of brutality in its 1976 published report, one of the leading critics, the Rhodesian Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (RCCJP), emerged as a particularly scathing critic. The Rhodesian government, it asserted, has:

> also shown by this legislation that it is prepared to condone and cover up acts of torture and brutality perpetrated by its Security Forces in pursuit of its war aims . . . Thus, if a policeman savagely tortures a civilian whom he genuinely believes to have security information and he does this in order to try to extract this information, he would be acting in good faith to suppress terrorism, even though he was acting unlawfully and even though it turned out that the prisoner did not possess any information.[39]

As insurgent attacks mounted, the Salisbury prison hangman was kept busy with executions of captured or alleged "terrorists" soaring during this crisis period. The Rhodesian regime's political position was further

undermined by the callous responses delivered by some of its leading spokesman in response to the growing African death toll. At a Geneva press conference in late 1976, pressed by a Rhodesian journalist as to why the government had ceased releasing the names of guerrillas who had been hanged, Foreign Minister van der Byl responded in his usual haughty drawl: "Well it's academic isn't it? They are usually dead afterwards."[40] Again, as Rhodesian minister of information, when earlier discussing the problem of infringement of curfews and "no-go" areas, he stated that "as far as I am concerned the more curfew-breakers that are shot the better."[41] Such disdainful attitudes to African welfare, prevalent even in these later stages of the Bush War, apart from presenting a propaganda gift to the insurgents served only to both illustrate and underpin the grossly distorted and distinctly one-sided COIN campaign waged by the Rhodesian regime.

It was a ruthless policy that clearly lacked any real understanding of the "human terrain" and flagrantly violated the principle of "operating in accordance with the law," as current British COIN doctrine dictates. Moreover, such underresourced policies were unlikely to either secure the population or "win popular support." As two leading authors further observed in reference to the 1975 Act: "Few countries throughout history can have passed a more dangerous and damning piece of legislation. The Act was a license to kill, maim and torture with a guarantee that almost anything was legal."[42]

Internal critics of such repressive policies, such as the CCJP continued, however, to be ignored, publicly insulted, or suppressed. Fourteen African MPs who questioned the renewal of the State of Emergency in mid-1973, arguing that, alternatively, the *political* causes of the war must be removed, were simply accused of supporting terrorism by Desmond Lardner-Burke, the then minister of justice, law, and order. Even the mounting criticism of such one-sided COIN policies by the Rhodesian regime's top soldier, Lieutenant General Peter Walls, a veteran of the Malaysian COIN campaign, bore no fruit. As *The Times* duly observed, "Walls was politically ahead of his time. He never conceded that the war could end the country's political problems, and constantly reminded Smith and the white Rhodesian public that they would have to reach a settlement with the black nationalist movements."[43] As he reminded one RBC (Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation) interviewer much later in the war:

> I think that I have said many times that there is a political aspect to defeating terrorism which is even more important than the military aspect. They go together of course, as does the economic aspect, together with the others . . . Terrorism can only come out of the woodwork if there is a political cause for it to support. If we have the political evolution . . . terrorism must fade away.[44]

In fact there was only one serious but ill-fated ground-level attempt to win African hearts and minds at this critical stage of the campaign and it significantly emerged not from the top Rhodesian political and military circles but from a junior commander. It summed up the existence of a profound lacuna in Rhodesian government thinking in regard to this vital COIN policy area. Developed originally by Lieutenant Ian Sheppard in 1973, the so-called "Sheppard Group," in the words of Mills and Wilson, "aimed to sell the PVs to the Africans through a variety of projects such as an African Development Bank, the inoculation of cattle and the granting of land titles to resettled Africans."[45] However, in a graphic illustration of the Smith regime's moral and political bankruptcy, the majority of the 38 projects proposed, "met insurmountable opposition from the ministries of Internal Affairs and Information and the group collapsed in November 1974."[46]

On the military front to cope with the growing insurgency threat, the next few years after 1972 saw a rapid reorganization and expansion of the Rhodesian security forces. Early on, the Rhodesian military had developed the highly effective "Fire Force" tactic whereby partly to offset manpower shortages, units of up to 30 infantry or eight four-man "sticks" were rapidly deployed by land or air—frequently by French-designed Alouette helicopter "gunships" or by parachute via Dakota aircraft—to encircle or cut off and destroy insurgent incursions. So successful were these often "surprise" tactics that according to Mills and Wilson, by mid-1979 they had accounted for 75 percent of all guerrilla casualties inside Rhodesia.[47] This was replicated in the area of the Special Forces with the Rhodesian Special Air Force expanded from a mere 30 personnel in 1975 to 270 fully qualified regulars by the war's end in 1980 and the significant expansion of the mounted "Grey Scouts."

Equally significant was the emergence in late 1973 of the highly effective if controversial unit, the Selous Scouts. Its formation was the direct result both of a growing strategic crisis as Portuguese control of the shared border with Mozambique visibly weakened, and of the impact of the insurgents' new, more covert tactics after 1972, which had deprived the Rhodesian security forces of much of their ground-level intelligence. An extract from a fraught conversation between founding commander, Lieutenant Colonel Reid Daley and his "recruiter," Lieutenant General Walls, commander of the Rhodesian armed forces, is indicative of the scale of the security crisis confronting the Rhodesian government after 1972. In Walls's words:

> things are not going well for us in the operational area . . . and the way the Portuguese are handling things in Mozambique is likely to make it even worse for us. It is vital we gather effective intelligence on the terrorists which will enable us to kill them . . . Special Branch are simply not capable of giving us this intelligence

on their own. It is no use, at this hotted-up stage of the war knowing where the terrorists were yesterday, or where they might be tomorrow . . . time is not on our side. We have the means to kill them, the Security Forces, but not the means to find them. I sincerely believe you can do that. The formation of this unit should have been done long ago . . . I repeat, time is not on our side . . . yesterday is too late.[48]

A most important development was the use from 1974 of these new expanded forces to neutralize the enemy "at home" by launching devastating cross-border raids mainly against the ZANLA and ZIPRA insurgent bases and training camps located in the principal "host" Front Line states of Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana. Of these, the most spectacular were the three raids conducted against the ZANLA training bases in Mozambique at Nyadzona and Chimoio and against Nkomo's headquarters in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. In June 1976, at Nyadzona in the Manica province a daring raid by 84 Selous Scouts dressed as FRELIMO soldiers, caused havoc with an estimated 300 ZANLA and Mozambican/FRELIMO soldiers killed. A subsequent Mozambique Board of Enquiry estimated more than 1,000 fatalities.[49] During the November 1977 Chimoio and Tembue raids by a composite SAS and RLI force numbering less than 200 personnel, not only were an estimated 2,000–3,000 ZANLA training recruits killed but also many local Mozambican civilians. The earlier Mapai raid of May–June 1977 had already finally destroyed what remained of the Mozambique railway system in the Gaza Province. An equally daring raid into Zambia in 1979, conducted mainly by Rhodesian SAS commandos and primarily aimed at killing the ZAPU/ZIPRA leader, Joshua Nkomo, resulted in both Zambian army and civilian deaths in Lusaka and culminated in the sinking of the ferry *Kasangula*, which vessel provided a major trade link between Zambia and Botswana. Other attacks were even launched in 1979 against Angola.

Despite their military value in prolonging the Rhodesian regime and perhaps persuading the Front Line states, appalled by the devastating damage to their own infrastructure, to be more amenable to negotiation, their results also had severe moral and political implications and consequences for the Rhodesian authorities. First, despite the denials of the Rhodesian military and political authorities, large numbers of civilians (especially women and children) were inevitably killed and injured during such ferocious raids. As one demobilized RLI Trooper later recalled, "sweeps of villages inevitably resulted in the tragic deaths of women and children and the sight of dead piccanins [a black African child] still haunts me."[50] An American Vietnam War veteran, one of scores of mainly British and American mercenaries who signed up to fight for the Rhodesian authorities, was more blunt: "Now we knew you couldn't get results by grabbing a piccanin and beating him senseless, yet we did it more than a few times. Still, if we'd have been more selective

with that kind of strong-arm approach, we wouldn't have been half as effective."[51] An intelligence officer, Bob North, recalled the often nefarious role of the Selous Scouts:

> I worked with the Selous Scouts. I know what they're capable of. A lot of things I didn't agree with, but we were thinking of the results. The end justifies the means—or did it? . . . but at the time it seemed like a good idea. I don't say the Scouts didn't commit atrocities—in fact it would make strategic sense, or intelligence sense, that they did.[52]

This not only fed local insurgent propaganda but attracted international condemnation. Second, the clear violations of the sovereignty of international borders attracted the wrath of both the United Nations and even South Africa, the latter furious at the damage caused to its détente policies in the region. In this sense, the raids, despite short-term military/security gains, may be considered to have been counterproductive in the longer term and ultimately to have contributed to Rhodesia's deeper political isolation. As Cilliers succinctly observed: "Rhodesian Security Forces had not yet realised that a good kill ratio and tactical ability were not the only determinants for success."[53]

Widespread use of tracker units, of PSYOPS (Psychological Operations) and "pseudo operations," whereby "turned" insurgents were used to infiltrate their own respective organizations and gain information or encourage disunity were also implemented. Equipment was also radically redesigned to deal with the insurgent landmine threat and ingeniously designed vehicles—notably the high-sided "Pookie mine detection vehicle" and other variations such as the "Rhino" and "Hippo"—were also used to good effect. Nevertheless, even within this generally successful military machine, political restraints could undermine their effectiveness and at times the Rhodesian government was again "hoist by its own petard." Thus, as Wood points out in relation to PSYOPS:

> The Rhodesians understood the importance of psychological warfare, but were always hampered by never achieving more than the African passive acceptance of the status quo. It meant that the Rhodesians could not evolve a counterinsurgency strategy, forcing them to concentrate on containment . . . Psychological warfare . . . that vital ingredient of successful counterinsurgency campaigns, remained impossible until the support of the people had been won by political reform.[54]

Without the support of the people, the "intelligence war," particularly after the new post-1972 insurgent offensive, was seriously undermined. The Rhodesian authorities were unable to combat or counter the extensive network of mujibas (teenage boy "spies") who observed every movement of the security forces. Defense correspondent, Johan Meiring

recalled: "Was their intelligence system good? Amazingly so . . . It was those *houts*—mostly teenagers—who were ostensibly herding cattle or whatever. Those *houts*, they knew exactly what was going on, exactly where the army was going and why . . . yeh they evolved a very good intelligence system with those mujibas."[55] Mercenary and Vietnam veteran, Chuck Hanson, concurred, rating the insurgents' intelligence as:

> excellent. The best. Even better than Vietnam. They lived with the people, they *were* the people. That's the ultimate factor in a war like this, having the indigenous people with you. They kept the gooks (insurgents) informed with local, hard combat intelligence, not all the highfalutin stuff we put out—the sitreps [situation reports] we relayed, and all that. That's not intelligence, though we had plenty of that. They had the picannin. Who'd run and tell them "The soldiers are coming". That's combat intelligence. The *gooks* had plenty of it and we didn't.[56]

Even extremist minister of information, P. K. Van Der Byl, agreed: "Their intelligence? Meaning the Patriotic Front terrorists? Very Good. Very Good. First Class. They knew what was going on."[57] Rural youth coordinator, Brother Mukonore reflected on the profound intelligence imbalance: "They didn't know the blacks, to put it bluntly . . . I could understand the whites, why they were bitter, because they were given only one side of the coin. They didn't know what was actually happening in the bush and underground—that the ordinary civilians, including their own cooks and workers—were part and parcel of the liberation struggle."[58] Political, even economic, reform to win back the support of the people, particularly these often unemployed "angry young men" who served so successfully as mujibas was never forthcoming. Similarly, the government's rigid racial policies were a critical factor in undermining any immediate solution to its military manpower shortage. As Norma Kriger has observed: "The power of the white minority state is partly reflected in its ability to expand its military and paramilitary forces by drawing chiefly on new African recruits to fight against African guerrilla armies."[59] However, this remained a key problem area for Rhodesia's long-term COIN strategy since, although many appreciated the military necessity for large-scale African recruitment into the armed forces, the government's own racial prejudices posed a major obstacle. In the words of Mills and Wilson:

> The vast reserve of black manpower was not effectively used until late in the war, recruitment being limited by both money and, especially, politics—the government being unwilling to have more blacks than whites in the military. Only by 1979 had two further battalions of the black-dominated Rhodesian African Rifles been created, bringing the total to three.[60]

The deep, racially based fear of arming Africans can be traced back deep into Rhodesian history.[61] Indeed, the last minute, desperate attempts by the Muzorewa government in the closing months of the war to establish the ill-trained and ill-disciplined African auxiliary militias (SFAs), constituting virtual private armies, was no substitute for the well-armed but outnumbered African regulars in the long-established white-officered Rhodesian African Rifles.

Despite its enviable operational reputation, in terms of the organization of command and control, there was much left to be desired within the Rhodesian military establishment. In the early years, the structure was essentially ad hoc: bedeviled and undermined by factional rivalries especially in the sensitive areas of intelligence gathering and operational control. Before the 1972 crisis, intelligence and operational control was almost exclusively retained in the hands of the British South Africa Police (BSAP), with the Rhodesian army rarely used. Joint Operation Centers (JOCs) were only established in temporary brigade areas when army support was required, which included military police representatives as well as civil commissioners from the Department of Internal Affairs. After the realization of the severity of the insurgent threat in 1972, the local JOCs were more closely linked through provincial JOCs to a Joint Planning Staff (JPS) and upward via a deputy minister in Smith's Office to the Security Council of the Rhodesian Cabinet. In September 1976, a War Council replaced the Security Council and in March 1977, a Combined Operations Headquarters (Comops) replaced the JPS. Yet, as Ian Beckett succinctly observes:

> In theory the creation of Comops should have enabled the Security Forces to develop a well co-ordinated strategy for the prosecution of the war. In reality, the command and control system failed at a number of levels. For one thing there was an increasing friction between Army and Police as the escalation of the war led to the replacement of BSAP personnel by the military in positions of responsibility on JOC's. In 1973 the JOC in the northeast was converted into a permanent operational brigade area—'Hurricane' . . . followed by . . . 'Thrasher' and 'Repulse' in 1976, 'Tangent', 'Grapple' and 'Splinter' in 1977 and 'SALOPS' in 1978. With the exception of the latter, which remained largely an administrative creation under BSAP control, the other JOC's were now chaired almost as a matter of course by the Army.

Beckett further notes:

> The Army was also increasingly critical of other civilian government agencies, notably Internal Affairs, which it held responsible for failing to perceive the nature of the growing ZANLA threat in the north-east prior to its eruption in 1972. Comops offered the possibility of reconciling differences but it never had effective control over civil affairs and ministries like Internal Affairs and Law and Order which had a considerable contribution to make to the war effort. Moreover,

Comops became entangled in the day-to-day conduct of the war rather than in planning long-term strategy. Its commander, General Peter Walls, also assumed command of all offensive and special forces as well as responsibility for all external operations. This left Lt. General John Hickman, commanding only black troops and white territorials, while his staff were deprived of any real function at all.[62]

Lieutenant Colonel Reid Daley confirmed the resulting dysfunctional impact at ground level:

from a soldier's viewpoint, there was no laid-down military strategy applicable to every operational area. Brigadiers were given their operational areas to command and thereafter each one did his own thing . . . as did the police . . . as did the Special Branch . . . as did the Internal Affairs . . . they all blamed the politicians for the disastrously developing state of affairs and, needless to say the politicians blamed everyone else.[63]

In effect, the Rhodesian political and military authorities only belatedly, using modern British COIN parlance, "integrated intelligence," applied the principle of "unity of effort" or adopted a "comprehensive approach" in their counterinsurgency campaign and was, arguably, never fully achieved. Over the next three years, moreover, there had been a dramatic reversal in Rhodesia's previously strong geostrategic position that would ultimately force the Smith regime to belatedly engage in serious political discussions on a strategic level. In April 1974, the Portuguese revolution and subsequent rapid retreat from its African colonies of Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique left Rhodesia markedly more vulnerable and its northeastern borders dangerously exposed. Overnight, Rhodesia's 1,000 kilometer border with Mozambique was left wide open. Her sanctions-busting outlets inland and via Beira were now irrevocably closed. As Cilliers observed, there were other wider strategic implications: "Not only did the independence of Mozambique have a profound effect on the war on Rhodesia but also the independence of Angola which prepared to play a large role in the training of ZIPRA forces."[64]

The critical blow to Rhodesia's survival, however, had come from South Africa, its key ally to the south in terms of both military and economic support. With the Portuguese collapse, the Vorster-led South African government had itself been forced to radically reassess its policy toward a growing ring of hostile black states. In 1976, Smith was bluntly told to accept the principle of black majority rule. He bitterly recalled:

We were placed in a situation where we virtually had no option. This was because of the actions of the South African Prime Minister, John Vorster. As far as countries like Britain were concerned we could defy them as we had done over the years. We could not do that to the *one* country which controlled our lifeline. So, very reluctantly, we were forced to accept it.[65]

Rhodesia had been sold out to facilitate a new détente. As Smith asserted, "Vorster was of the opinion that he could work with the black leaders to the north of us and help to solve the Rhodesian problem. He told me this: 'In return the black countries were going to accept South Africa and their philosophy. So, to a certain extent, we were to be used as a sacrificial lamb in helping to solve *South Africa's* problems.'"[66] As Rhodesian intelligence officer, Bob North reaffirmed:

> we couldn't have survived without them. We had the SAP . . . up here for most of the war. They were training in counter-insurgency. They were learning from us. But I think they learned more from the politics than they have from the bloody war. And we paid for it, we paid for their support. South Africa put the squeeze on at times, refused to allow weapons through—and no ammunition. We were getting pretty low at one stage. And they cut us off. . .[67]

Smith now faced immense political, financial, and military pressure from the South African government to negotiate. Financial aid and loans were frozen, elements of the several thousand South African police were withdrawn in August 1975 and remaining South African pilots and technicians followed in August 1976. Both overtly and covertly, this crushing "local" regional pressure was reinforced by an American Carter-led Democrat Presidency, freed from the political diversion of the Vietnam war, heavily committed to upholding human rights and particularly anxious to contain the spread of communism in Africa by effecting a rapid settlement of the Rhodesian crisis. Via mechanisms such as the earlier talks held by Henry Kissinger, former secretary of state and those conducted by Cyrus Vance, current U.S. secretary of state and David Owen, British foreign secretary, a swift accommodation with moderate black nationalist politicians and Front Line state leaders was urgently sought, and, from 1974, Smith was accordingly coerced into political concessions at several successive summit meetings. In 1974, under the threat of withdrawal of South African Air Force and police support, he had already released leading political detainees, including Joshua Nkomo and, most significantly, Robert Mugabe who took over ZANU leadership from Sithole, who had been deeply discredited by his earlier talks with Smith.

Both at the international Geneva and the Victoria Falls Meetings of 1976–77, however, he stonewalled and repeatedly rejected any proposals for imminent black majority rule via free elections that would include "terrorist" parties, particularly the reviled "communist" ZANU/ZANLA.[68] In this, he was inadvertently aided by diversions caused by growing and often violent clashes occurring *within* the ZANU/ZANLA leadership and the continuing, often bitter, friction also occurring between the rival ZANLA and ZIPRA armies that had been supposedly united from 1976 under the banner of the "Patriotic Front."[69] At times,

he even played a skilful game of *divide et impera* by conducting both overt and clandestine negotiations not only with the favored Muzorewa's more moderate ANC but even with Nkomo's perceived more negotiable ZAPU/ZIPRA group.

But all this was achieved at the expense of a rapidly deteriorating internal security situation. While Smith fiddled, his beloved Rhodesia burned. With the continued dearth of any significant internal political, social, or even economic initiatives to win over the African population and a consequent loss of the internal propaganda war with ZANU and ZANLA, the security situation deteriorated further. As South African military support receded after 1975, Rhodesia faced fresh onslaughts from ZIPRA and ZANLA (the latter led by Robert Mugabe after 1974). Both insurgent groups had deeply benefited from increased Chinese, Cuban, North Korean, and Soviet military and training support, with new bases opened up alongside FRELIMO in newly independent Mozambique. The cumulative effect of these military pressures was revealed in Rhodesian government statistics. In 1977, a total of 1,759 insurgents and 197 members of the security forces were killed inside Rhodesia a well as 1,055 civilians of which 56 were white. By the summer of 1977, Rhodesian civilian and military casualties were running at the rate of 100 a week compared with the average of three a week in the first five years of hostilities.[70]

By December 1977, under such unrelenting internal and external political pressures, Smith bowed to the inevitable and proceeded to authorize national elections as part of an "internal settlement," followed by a cease-fire, which he vainly hoped would still maintain whites in power.

PHASE 3: THE FALL OF "WHITE RHODESIA," 1978–80

As if to underline the precarious security situation, the elections were held in the midst of a yet another major insurgency offensive launched between April 17 and 21, 1979 that required the deployment of a stupendous number of 60,000 regular and reserve security personnel for protection duties: arguably the last gasp of "white power." Nevertheless, 18 out of 932 polling stations were directly attacked by insurgent groups; many more were deeply threatened. Several pro-government chiefs and headmen were brutally murdered in the fraught run-up to the election and there were several attempts to assassinate the leading politician, Chief Chirau. Four African parties ran for election, Bishop Abel Muzorewa's UANC (United African National Council), Sithole's wing of ZANU, Chief Chirau's ZUPO (Zimbabwe's United People's Organisation), and Ndiweni's UNFP (United National Federal Party). Bishop Abel Muzorewa, leader of the moderate UANC (United African National Council) emerged victorious with 64 percent of the votes cast and 51 of the

72 African seats in the new Rhodesian Parliament. The Rhodesia Front easily won the 20 white seats required to keep a controlling influence over the new Zimbabwe-Rhodesian government. Although approximately 1,750,000 out of a possible 2,750,000 votes were cast, the predictable exclusion of the Patriotic Front and the terms of the new constitution designed to give the white minority a substantial controlling influence stopped short of the famous "six principles" and of the British pledge of majority rule. Consequently, the new self-proclaimed government of "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia" received no British or international recognition and sanctions remained firmly in place. Muzorewa's promise to de-escalate the war and arrange an internal amnesty fell on largely deaf ears, with only a few guerrillas appearing to hand over their arms.

As the guerrilla war intensified and, as his personal memoirs dramatically reveal, by August 1978 even the hitherto indomitable Smith had realized the game was up on virtually all fronts and including the already overstretched interim government:

> The internal security situation was grim and was brought home to me twice on Thursday 3 August. A delegation of farmers from the north-eastern area came to see me, as they were concerned over a new trend. Because the terrorists had consistently failed in their efforts to dislodge the farmers, they had now resorted to intimidating the labour, even to the extent of killing some . . . the farmers believed that some security assistance was necessary. That afternoon there was a meeting with the Nat JOC, and they impressed on me their concern over the lack of success with the ceasefire campaign. They said that the black political parties in the transitional government appeared to lack motivation and were clearly not putting in enough effort. This was adding fuel to a general despondency and a continuing drop in morale among the white community, and associated with this, our emigration figures were running high. I was alarmed to hear that as a result we had reached a situation where we were losing one territorial company of our fighting men per month. This was an intolerable situation. With our small white population we simply did not have the manpower to sustain this loss, with the result that our performance in the security field would decline, and this would obviously play into the hands of the terrorists.[71]

Martin Meredith provides even more startling evidence of the crisis of white morale. In December 1978, alone nearly 3,000 whites left the country bringing the total number for the year 1978 to more than 18,000. Over a three-year period, 1976–78, the exodus amounted to nearly 50,000 whites or around one-fifth of the white population. Even allowing for the number immigrants, the loss in three years was nearly 32,000 over this critical three-year period.[72] It could even be argued that Smith's blatantly "one-sided" COIN policy at tactical/ground level had, by neglecting to win the African (predominantly rural) middle ground, and consequently, allowing deep and violent penetration of Rhodesia's borders and farming

heartland, ironically cost him the hearts and minds of his vital white constituency on whom his own political survival ultimately depended.

The economic impact of the war was equally devastating. Mining receipts had drastically fallen because of the collapse in market prices. Tobacco and maize (corn) production was significantly diminished, particularly in the increasingly deserted northeastern war zones, while Rhodesia's other industries were costing more in foreign exchange than they earned. Consumer spending was being progressively eroded by the steady exodus of whites. By 1978, an estimated 600 to 1,000 whites a month were "taking the gap" (deserting the country including, as a horrified Smith now recognized, a disproportionately high number of white males of military age). In 1977, Rhodesia's GNP had already fallen in real terms by 7 percent, 4 percent more than the year before. The Rhodesian economy also needed to create 110,000 more jobs a year simply to absorb black unemployment, a problem only partially redressed, with great irony, by their recruitment into the guerrilla forces.

As Christopher Coker has observed, the real impact of the war could be measured by the 1978–79 Rhodesian budget that provided for a net increase in defense appropriation of only 2 percent, 1 percent less than 1977 if taken as a proportion of total public expenditure. In effect, the Rhodesian government appeared "to have deliberately budgeted for the war's de-escalation, a gesture less of confidence . . . than of a belief that the economy could no longer keep pace with the war's escalation." In Coker's words: "the cost of the guerrilla war was becoming insupportable both in human and economic terms."[73]

Three horrific events probably accelerated the "white flight" in 1978–79. In June 1978, 12 missionaries, 8 adults, and 4 children were variously raped, hacked, and bludgeoned to death at the Elim Pentecostal Mission near the major white settlement at Umtali, allegedly by ZANLA operatives. The event sent a shiver of fear through "white Rhodesia." Equally devastating for white morale was the shooting down of two Rhodesian Viscount airliners in October 1978 and February 1979, respectively, by ZIPRA insurgents armed with Soviet SAM ground-to-air missiles. The few survivors of the second crash were brutally massacred before help could arrive. A total of 102 passengers and crew perished. Further, in July 1978, the first major gun battles took place within the city limits of Salisbury, the nation's capital. There could be no more convincing evidence of the breakdown of internal security and the greatly enhanced ability of the guerrillas to strike at will at the very heart of the hated "white citadels." The successful insurgent strike at Rhodesia's precious oil storage and refineries complex on the outskirts of the capital, Salisbury, in 1979 provided further conclusive evidence of a rapid security meltdown.

Bob North, a member of the Rhodesian Intelligence Corps, observed:

> The oil depot fire was a major victory on the part of the guerrillas. Absolutely incredible from a psychological point of view. People were picking up and packing that week. You see, the government tried to play down the negative stuff but sometimes it was too obvious to hide. In fact, towards the last year, the last eighteen months, people on the ground—such as ourselves in the intelligence networks, and even the regular troops—realised that we were containing, not winning. There were lots of factors involved—you've got a wife at home, an emotional break-up, and the divorce rate in this country during the war was incredible. Now that also added to the poor morale of the troops. So the aggression wound down. People who in the past had been all too willing to go into the bush would find a tame doctor to get them struck off for a couple of months. They wouldn't fight. That was when the emigration picked up. And that was when the government's strategy changed.[74]

Desperate measures were now resorted to, notably the call-up extended to white males between the ages of 50 and 59. The late Reverend John Beck recalled the massive tensions caused by these cataclysmic events as he, as one of the "white volkstrum" was summarily conscripted to man roadblocks around Salisbury with only a pistol issued with which to defend himself. He recalled a situation of "rising white tension and a rapidly growing loss of confidence in the government's ability to protect."[75]

In the more rural areas, the poorest quality of white manpower was often conscripted with minimal training. A junior administrator in the Department of Home Affairs hastily drafted into the military during the closing months of the war, recalled: "We were exhausted, overstretched and eventually unconvinced by the cause. Some people were never convinced and didn't even know of the outlet of conscientious objection." His "stick," hastily trained by the RLI [Rhodesian Light Infantry], "had three men I wouldn't trust with my enemy's sister . . . Home Affairs had the reputation of picking up the dregs of conscripts."[76]

On the overall political failure of Rhodesia's COIN campaign, he bitterly asserted:

> The political combination of South African withdrawal, Portuguese collapse and the vanguard of [government] political correctness in (claiming) "natives are benign not restless" were all such hopelessly outmoded and patronising views of ZANU and ZAPU that they (the Patriotic Front) easily out-manoeuvred the brokers of peace as easily as the antagonists. The tide of world opinion tsunamied over the croaking indignations of Ian Smith and even over the drawbridge of moderate voices.[77]

The 1978 initiative had come far too late for deeply radicalized insurgent groups already sensing military victory, confident of international

legitimacy and who had, moreover, already again been ruthlessly excluded from the internal political process. Smith was clearly no De Klerk and Mugabe was no Mandela; too much "blood and treasure" had been expended and black and white Rhodesians were now to experience several more months of unnecessary suffering before the already doomed Smith-Muzorewa government failed and a final externally driven political solution was reached. As the ZANLA leader, Mugabe, himself so clearly recognized, in 1979, as Rhodesia lay militarily and economically prostrate, the climax of his Maoist strategy had finally arrived: "Our liberation struggle had progressed to where we believed we had more than 2/3 of the country . . . we had the rural areas in our grip . . . the end of 1979, with the coming of the rains was going to see the development of the urban guerrilla struggle . . . we felt that we needed yet another thrust in order to bring the fight home to where the whites had their citadels."[78]

Ironically, it was primarily the "mother country," Britain, and the rest of its "family," the Commonwealth, so cynically spurned by Ian Smith in 1965 that came to his rescue. They saved Rhodesia from imminent Armageddon by, first, at the 1979 Lusaka summit, "converting" newly appointed Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to accept the legitimacy of the insurgents' cause—despite her deep disapproval of their methods—and, second, physically supervising a cease-fire and arranging the Lancaster House summit in London.[79] The conference represented a final resolution of the Rhodesian problem that, this time, crucially included representatives not only of the Smith-Muzorewa administration but of both the Front Line states and, most importantly of all, the two key insurgent parties. The war had cost Rhodesia around 30,000 dead including almost 1,000 members of the security forces and 8,250 insurgents. Just over 400 white civilians had perished but the paltry official figure of 691 African civilian dead was almost certainly a gross underestimate.[80]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Rhodesian Bush War of 1966–80 provides one of the most striking examples since the end of the World War II of a deeply flawed, imbalanced, and ultimately failed "one-sided" COIN strategy. Internally, the Rhodesian white supremacist regime, led by Prime Minister Ian Smith, already wedded to an illegitimate, uncompromising ideology, took extreme strategic risks in its COIN campaign. They relentlessly pursued an almost totally military solution while eschewing any proposal or opportunity to win over moderate African opinion by a sustained or even embryonic program of social, political, and economic reform. The regime's culpability stood even higher bearing in mind the fact that it not only ignored the advice of some of its most senior civilian and

military advisers (including two of its top commanders), but instead conducted a carefully orchestrated propaganda and disinformation campaign which, after 1972, progressively denied even its own white constituents the realities of what was effectively a losing war.

Externally, the Rhodesian regime relied far too heavily and, ultimately fatally, on its two main allies, Portugal and South Africa, for its political and economic survival. Indeed, it was only the sudden collapse of Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique that effectively emasculated its most vulnerable northeastern border, and the steady withdrawal of South African military and economic support—not any substantial internal political concessions—that forced it into a reformist agenda. Even after these devastating strategic setbacks, Smith engaged in classic stalling tactics, both benefiting from and exploiting insurgent and Front Line state disunity until a runaway Rhodesian defense budget and imminent economic catastrophe, coupled with a massive white exodus, provided him with his political Waterloo in 1978. It was only the efficiency of its tiny but powerful and highly adaptive war machine that, particularly through devastating cross-border raids, enabled the politically flawed Smith-Muzorewa interim government to survive a further desperate few months. Ultimately, even this admittedly highly effective Rhodesian war machine (whose reputation is still flaunted and much admired by Rhodesian apologists) faced imminent Armageddon in the face of a continuing massive white exodus after 1978 and a dramatic rise in insurgent numbers.

In its protracted 15-year counterinsurgency campaign, the Rhodesian regime, as we have seen, either ignored or violated virtually every key principle of existing and subsequent COIN theory. Even in terms of apparent successes, such as cross-border raids, and in "neutralizing the enemy"—which, mirroring Vietnam, in Rhodesian terms relied predominantly upon crude body counts—the result was eventually counterproductive as its increasingly indiscriminate methods both violated international sovereignty and constituted clear breaches of the rule of law, more specifically, the Law of Armed Conflict. The violation of human rights was, of course, not the sole prerogative of the Rhodesian regime; its principal insurgent enemies, ZANLA and ZIPRA, were also frequently guilty of murder, torture, and intimidation. The difference lay not in their methods but in the profound contrast in the nature of their political purpose; the insurgent cause had full international legitimacy, the white supremacist Rhodesian government patently did not. Only on the military front of its COIN campaign did the Rhodesian regime truly "learn and adapt," as modern British COIN doctrine advises, but the absence of any meaningful political initiative, combined with a rapidly collapsing resource base, meant there could be no prospect of satisfying the last principle, "preparing for the long term." Smith's dream of 1,000 years of

uninterrupted white rule had lasted barely 15 years. In the succinct words of Eddison Zvogbo, the deputy secretary of ZANU's Publicity and Information Department:

> The Smith regime lost this war largely because they did not have a political argument. Militarily, they were far superior to us, but they just did not conjure up effective political arguments. They had none. We said this was a white minority racist regime and there was no way they could demonstrate it was otherwise. We demonstrated that armed struggle was the only solution, and we knew how to transmit that message.[81]

As the former British Chief of the Defence Staff, General Richards, recently asserted with specific reference to British COIN operations over the past quarter century, "military might cannot alone win wars," and that, "the need to have a complimentary diplomatic and cultural dimension to any action was the most important lesson."[82] This constitutes a basic lesson of COIN strategy that the British have learned from their recent campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, but which the Rhodesian regime both ignored and never really tried to learn until, inevitably, the prospect of a racial apocalypse finally dawned.

NOTES

1. B. Cole, *The Elite: Rhodesian Special Air Force* (Transkei: Three Knights Publishing, 1984), 62.

2. K. Flower, *Serving Secretly: Rhodesia's CIO on Record* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago, 1987), 113.

3. A. Binda, *The Rhodesia Regiment: From Boer War to Bush War 1899–1980* (Alberton, South Africa, Galago, 2012), 163–4.

4. J. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves* (London: Heinemann, 1982). Such sentiments were paralleled in his other infamous observation on black advancement: "It will be over my dead body before any kaffir would be invited into this Cabinet room." Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 127.

5. For typical examples see, C. Cocks, *Fireforce: One man's War in the Rhodesian Light Infantry* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 2007); T. Bax, *Three Sips of Gin: Dominating the Battle Space with Rhodesia's Elite Selous Scouts* (Solihull, UK: Helion Books, 2013); A. Binda, *The Rhodesia Regiment: From Boer War to Bush War, 1899–1980* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago, 2012); Lieutenant Colonel R. Reid-Daly and P. Stiff, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago, 1982). For a good, detailed, and overarching military study, see, P. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War: A Military History* (Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword, 1988).

6. Notable exceptions are Ian Beckett, "The Rhodesian Army," in Ian F.W. Beckett and John Pimlott, eds., *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985); J. K. Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); R. J. T. Wood, "Countering the Chimurenga: The Rhodesian Counterinsurgency Campaign, 1962–80," in Carter Malkasian

and Daniel Marston, eds., *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* (Oxford: Osprey, 2008), pp. 185–222; G. Mills and G. Wilson, "Who Dares Loses: Assessing Rhodesia's Counter-Insurgency Experience," *RUSI Journal* 152, no. 6 (December 2007), 22–31. Even with the availability of secondary sources, there has been a problem with documentation due to the deliberate destruction of government and military records in Salisbury on the eve of independence.

7. See, Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966); Frank Kitson, *Bunch of Five* (Faber and Faber, London, 1977); David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006); John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

8. See, UK Ministry of Defence, *Army Field Manual, Vol. 1. Part 10: Countering Insurgency* (London, October 2009).

9. See, for instance, Edmund Yorke, *Forgotten Colonial Crisis: Britain and Northern Rhodesia at War, 1914–18* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), especially Chapter 8 for an example of the political impact of the World War I upon returning/demobilized Rhodesian African servicemen.

10. Cilliers, *COIN in Rhodesia*, 3.

11. Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 89.

12. Ibid., 79.

13. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 43.

14. R. J. T. Wood, *Zambezi Valley Insurgency: Early Rhodesian Bush War Operations* (Solihull, UK: Helion, 2012), 3.

15. R. C. Good, *The International Politics of the Rhodesian Rebellion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 65.

16. Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 111.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 112.

19. Ibid., 112–3.

20. Ibid., 113.

21. Ibid.

22. Wood, "Countering the Chimurenga," 113.

23. Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 120.

24. Cilliers, *Counterinsurgency*, 16.

25. D. Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (London: James Currey, 1985), 164; and Edmund Yorke, "African Exile Armies: ZANLA, ZIPRA, and the Politics of Disunity," in Matthew Bennett and Paul Latawski, eds., *Exile Armies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 103.

26. Lan, *Guns and Rain*, 164.

27. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 41.

28. Ibid., 61.

29. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 242.

30. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*, 242.

31. Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 135; Mills and Wilson, "Who Dares Loses," 23.

32. D. Martin and Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), 74.

33. Martin and Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 75.
34. Cilliers, *COIN in Rhodesia*, 16.
35. Martin and Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 98–99.
36. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 84.
37. Beckett, "Rhodesian Army," 181.
38. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 87.
39. Rhodesian Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, *Civil War in Rhodesia* (Salisbury, Rhodesia: RCCJP, 1976), 83 and 84–85.
40. Martin and Johnson, *Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 104.
41. Ibid., 108.
42. Ibid., 104.
43. *The Times* (London), July 30, 2010.
44. RBC Interview, February 15, 1979; Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 162.
45. Beckett, "Rhodesian Army," 181–2; Mills and Wilson, "Who Dares Loses," 31.
46. Mills and Wilson, "Who Dares Loses," 31; and Beckett, "Rhodesian Army," 181–2.
47. Mills and Wilson, "Who Dares Loses," 28. See also principally Cocks, *Fire Force* and Flower, *Serving Secretly*, *passim*, for details of these operations.
48. Reid-Daly, *Secret War*, 45.
49. See Moorcraft and McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War*, 44–45; Yorke, "African Exile Armies," 108–9 for more details of this and other raids.
50. Author interview, Salisbury, Rhodesia, April 1980. As Beckett confirms: "There was never any real attempt at political indoctrination or instruction with the Rhodesian Armed Forces, and to the end of the war the guerrilla insurgency tended to be regarded as a military rather than a political problem to which military solutions alone should be applied." Beckett, *Rhodesian Army*, 177.
51. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 211.
52. Ibid.
53. Cilliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia*, 26. It was a trap that nearly befell the British in Afghanistan (2001–14) during the early years of their COIN campaign there. See, especially, E. J. Yorke, *Playing the Great Game: Britain, War and Politics in Afghanistan since 1839* (London: Robert Hale, 2012), Chapter 8, 359–91.
54. Wood, "Countering the Chimurenga," 194, 196. See also Reid-Daly, who recalled: "Belatedly, a pysac team, a psychological warfare team, came into being, but it was hamstrung by an official policy totally out of step with the true state of things, and it achieved very little. . .it was. . .another facet of a fundamental problem those of us in the field had to face throughout the war. . .too little and much too late." Reid-Daly, *Top Secret War*, 281.
55. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 69.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., 74.
58. Ibid., 79.
59. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*, 242.
60. Mills and Wilson, *Who Dares Loses*, 5.
61. See for instance, Yorke, *Forgotten Colonial Crisis*, especially Chapter 3.
62. Beckett, "Rhodesian Army," 171–2.

63. Reid-Daly, *Serving Secretly*, 281.

64. Cilliers, *COIN in Rhodesia*, 20.

65. Interview, Ian Smith, in Michael Charlton, *The Last Colony in Africa: Diplomacy and the Independence of Rhodesia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 2.

66. Charlton, *Last Colony*, 2.

67. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, p.155.

68. See, especially, Martin and Johnson, *Struggle for Zimbabwe*, especially Chapters 11–14 and L. H. Gann and T. H. Henrikson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: Battle in the Bush* (New York: Praeger, 1981), passim, for details of these international conferences and meetings on the Rhodesian problem. As ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo recalled at the 1975 Salisbury conference, even desperate calls for Smith to seek the opinion of his own war-weary white electorate on the issue of majority rule were bluntly rejected: "he [Smith] would not even let them vote. . .on the single and fundamental issue of majority rule. . .he was racist to the bone." Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of My Life* (Methuen, London, 1984), 157–8.

69. See especially, E. J. Yorke, "African Exile Armies," 104–14 for a detailed discussion of this issue.

70. C. Coker, "Decolonisation in the Seventies: Rhodesia and the Dialectic of National Liberation," *Round Table* 69 (1979), 128.

71. Ian Smith, *Bitter Harvest: The Great Betrayal* (London: Blake Publishing, 2002), 260.

72. M. Meredith, *The Past Is Another Country: Rhodesia, 1890–1979* (London: André Deutsch, 1979), 353.

73. Coker, "Decolonisation," 128.

74. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 166.

75. Author interview, Salisbury, Rhodesia, May 1980.

76. Author interview, June 4, 2014.

77. Ibid.

78. Interview with Charlton Mugabe, *Last Colony*, 52–53.

79. See E. J. Yorke, "'A Family Affair': The Lancaster House Summit," in D. H. Dunn, eds., *Diplomacy at the Highest Level: The Evolution of International Summitry* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 200–19, for a detailed study of this process and the conduct of the Lancaster House Summit.

80. Beckett, "Rhodesian Army," 186.

81. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 62.

82. *The Times* (London), May 28, 2014.

CHAPTER 9

Northern Ireland's "Troubles," 1969–98: Principles versus Practice in Counterinsurgency?[1]

Aaron Edwards

> [A]ny system of military training or education which leaves strategy untouched, except by the few, is not only an insult to the officers of the army, but a danger to the State.[2]

> When military force falls into disrepute, it does not necessarily follow that it has lost its utility; what is much more likely is that it has been misapplied.[3]

> Insurgent leaders study the lessons of previous campaigns too, and will often seek to emulate the most successful elements of an established model, which they hope will provide the 'means' to achieve their chosen 'ends'. But if they fail to adapt the strategy they expose themselves to early destruction.[4]

INTRODUCTION

The British Army, it has been argued, is the market leader in counterinsurgency operations. A back catalog of "successes" is frequently paraded as evidence of innate military expertise that was built up over two centuries or more of fighting irregular opponents in colonial hotspots around the world. This chapter considers the British Army's longest-running military deployment in support of the civil power on home soil by asking why, if Britain was so "good" at counterinsurgency, did its campaign in Northern Ireland take so long to reach an apogee? Moreover, while focusing on the years when the military undertook a deliberate phase of counterinsurgency operations (1971–76), it is necessary to ask why it

almost ended in military failure and how, ultimately, Britain was able to claim political success in the late 1990s.

Careful examination of the army's initial deployment, its short-lived honeymoon with the minority Catholic community, and the controversies surrounding allegations of a disproportionate use of force, all reveal some surprisingly mixed conclusions about the achievements of Operation *Banner*. As a contribution to this ongoing debate, this chapter offers a strategic reading of the army's involvement in Northern Ireland with a particular focus on the engagement between the British Security Forces (which consisted of the regular army, its locally recruited Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), and the police in the form of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)) and the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), Britain's principal irregular adversary. Research on the military dimension of the Northern Ireland conflict has consistently ignored the strategic interplay between state and nonstate military actors in this case and instead overstates the tactical and operational responses employed by the counterinsurgent forces.[5]

UNPACKING THE MYTH OF BRITISH COUNTERINSURGENCY

Andrew Mumford has convincingly argued that the British, "far from being the counterinsurgent exemplars that history has benevolently cast them, have in fact consistently proven to be slow learners and slow strategic burners in the realm of counterinsurgency warfare."[6] However, while making a persuasive point about the ad hoc nature of Britain's lessons learning process, the myths surrounding British prowess in counterinsurgency are not new and historians have commented on the strategic, operational, and tactical blindspots that seemed to bedevil military operations in the 1970s, specifically in relation to the dearth of adequate doctrine on counterinsurgency.[7] Most of the available evidence points toward a serious failing in the learning process that was only overcome when adaptation was demanded and innovation spurred by the reorganization of the strategy driving Britain's security policy in the face of the IRA's ruthless terrorist campaign.

One of the key shibboleths to have grown up around British counterinsurgency in Northern Ireland surrounds the personality of General Sir Frank Kitson, a noted practitioner of this kind of warfare in colonial hotspots in the mid-twentieth century, who served as a brigade commander in Northern Ireland between 1970 and 1973. Kitson brought with him a reputation for having turned the tide on communist insurgents in Malaya and the Mau Mau in Kenya. Yet, while Kitson certainly influenced the shaping of military operations in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s, this

was largely concentrated in the Belfast area. Indeed, his alleged adjudication in the formation of the highly secretive Military Reconnaissance Force (MRF) became a notable military and political disaster. Its activities bordered on the unlawful and contravened the established norms in British counterinsurgency that force (if and when employed) should be discriminatory, proportionate, and in line with political ends as laid down by civilian politicians.[8]

In many respects, the fixation with Kitson's pet theories obscures the institutional learning that was so obviously in train throughout the "Troubles." It also underappreciates the dialectical process (of trial and error) underway at unit and subunit level in adapting to the unique context of Northern Ireland in the first decade of the Troubles.[9] This chapter asks the deceptively simple question: if Kitson—and ergo British proficiency at counterinsurgency more broadly—was so good, then why did military operations nearly result in failure by the mid-1970s? In considering this overarching question, we might also examine how the army was able to adapt to bring itself into line with the liberal democratic trends that were to shape British policy on Northern Ireland from the late 1970s until the end of Operation *Banner* in 2007.[10]

NORTHERN IRELAND: DESCENT INTO CHAOS

The Troubles that erupted in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s soon escalated beyond large-scale civil disturbances to coordinated terrorist campaigns from both loyalists and republicans within a short space of time. While there were multiple grievances informing the conflagration, including a demand by the Catholic minority for civil rights in employment, housing, a fairer redistribution of the electoral franchise, and a loss of confidence in the locally devolved Unionist government among the Protestant majority, it is impossible to determine with any certainty why the conflict endured even when these causes were addressed by the early 1970s. It was the civil rights movement and the counterdemonstrations by supporters of the Reverend Ian Paisley, a fundamentalist Protestant lay-preacher, which served to draw people onto the streets and made violence unavoidable. However, the sectarian character of the conflict undoubtedly fed the indiscriminate attacks now underway within both communities.[11] The backdrop to the mass mobilization of rival groups was the centuries-old incompatible ethnic and national identity aspirations of the two principal communities. Protestants generally supported the continual maintenance of the link between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, while Catholics aspired toward a unification of Ireland and the breaking of the British connection. This set these groups on a collision course that would see their long-running confrontation degenerate into open armed conflict.

The lack of political progress in brokering a deal between Protestant Unionists and Catholic Nationalists in 1968–69 meant that politicians in London and Belfast came to rely more and more on the police to quell civil disturbances. The RUC and its auxiliary force, the Ulster Special Constabulary ((USC), more popularly known as the "B Specials"), proved unable to curb the mounting violence between the two communities in Belfast and on the afternoon of August 14, 1969 the RUC inspector general, Anthony Peacock, telephoned the Home Office in London to formally ask for military assistance.[12] The home secretary, James Callaghan, responded by notifying the Ministry of Defence of the request, which in turn mobilized troops from 39 (Airportable) Brigade, then garrisoned at Lisburn outside Belfast, to keep the peace. As the violence spread to Northern Ireland's second city, Londonderry, a further request was made to deploy the military onto the streets. While it was hoped that the army's appearance would be a temporary, calming, measure, violence continued and soon drew troops into direct intervention when the RUC was routinely disarmed under proposals made by the Hunt Commission. The army, which had not been deployed in Ireland since the early 1920s (except for a short time during the IRA "border campaign" in the 1950s) now found itself responsible for public order in lieu of a demoralized RUC. Nevertheless, for the general officer commanding (GOC) in Northern Ireland, Lieutenant General Sir Ian Freeland, the deployment of troops would only be a temporary measure. As he informed a press conference in October 1969:

> The Army therefore came in in August not to impose Law and Order by force, but to "keep the peace" between two rival factions in the Community and help the people regain their confidence and overcome their fears. The ring would thus be held while the New Deal for Ulster and the reorganisation of the Police forces were being worked out by the Government and the Hunt Commission. The aim of the Army all along was to work towards the re-establishment of the RUC in all areas as soon as possible.[13]

Freeland's comments would generate considerable consternation from the Labour government, with the Home Secretary James Callaghan reiterating the prime minister's position that the troops would stay there in sufficient numbers for as long as necessary to ensure that civil disturbances were brought under control.[14] In the absence of a recognizable political strategy from London or Belfast, the army now stepped in to bridge the yawning gap between the people and the politicians.

A GAME OF TWO HALVES: HOW TACTICS INFLUENCED STRATEGY

When the army deployed on Northern Ireland's streets in August 1969, it found itself configured toward "keeping the peace" in a colonial setting.

This was particularly acute among those frontline units that had a long and distinguished career of fighting "brush fire" wars of decolonization.[15] Consequently, many of the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) adhered to by commanders on the ground quickly lost their utility when confronted with the domesticity of Belfast and Londonderry.[16] Some tactics, such as cordon and search, did remain an effective military means of clearing ground before, during, and after violent incidents, permitting troops to follow up leads while reassuring the local population. However, there were other tactics, like curfews, which were simply not applied in ways that resembled the best practice contained in army doctrine nor that took into consideration the local context in which they were imposed.

As a result of the negative response to these colonial policing tactics, it is tempting to buy into the myth that the British Army was not at all best placed to respond to the violence on the streets at this time because it had become, in Correlli Barnett's words, "an imperial army in a European role."[17] It might well be the case that the army's TTPs were unsuitable for a domestic setting, but this ignores the fact that the British Army's doctrine and training emphasized the need to adapt to the unique circumstances prevailing in different contexts. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the military learned invaluable lessons in the early 1970s that ultimately paved the way for strategic success further down the line. The key question is what were these lessons and how did they lead to a reshaping of the military contribution to countering a growing terrorist threat?

One of the first, hard lessons learned by the army in Northern Ireland was that imposing order could so easily be exploited to give the impression that they were being unduly harsh against one community and not the other. In early July 1970, the army imposed a curfew on the Lower Falls community in West Belfast. Effectively locking the community down for three days while soldiers seized weapons and ammunition from IRA caches, the army very quickly found itself having to justify its actions in the face of considerable media scrutiny. In subsequent years, it has been argued that the curfew turned the tide on army relations with the Catholic community,[18] but this is not entirely accurate. It is simply untrue that the army only targeted the Catholic community at this time and, in fact, also seized weapons and ammunition from Protestant extremists. Moreover, the army had fought its most intense pitched battles with Protestants in the neighboring Shankill Road, which ran parallel to the Falls Road, up until that point. This had already culminated in the "battle of the Shankill"—which lasted three days in October 1969—and saw the army forced to use so much CS gas to quell the trouble that the clouds of smog thrown up by these public order weapons hung heavy over the area for days afterward. The truth was that relations between both communities were just as strained and remained so through much of 1970.

Intriguingly, the army did attempt to rebuild relations with the local community. By the end of the summer, HQNI was reporting a change in relations with the Catholic community:

> In Belfast streets in the peaceline area and in the Falls district were flooded to a depth of six feet in places. By dawn soldiers were wading through the streets and using boats to rescue and supply food, exactly one year after they had first intervened in the same streets at the time of the August disturbances in 1969. In these streets, where the Security Forces had twice come under hostile fire during the course of the year, it seemed that the cycle of events was complete as soldiers were welcomed once again as saviours on the anniversary of their first intervention.[19]

Despite the temporary easing of relations with the Catholic community, the army still faced some considerable structural difficulties, particularly in light of the attitude of the police not to take the threat posed by Protestant paramilitaries seriously. Additionally, the Special Branch had been weakened by years of neglect and its intelligence was relatively out of date.

The brittle relationship between the army and the Catholic community deteriorated substantially when local Unionist politicians saw an opportunity to use the military to combat an IRA threat in ways that exposed their more coercive edge. As Huw Bennett has argued: "Ultimately, the army failed to reconcile the contradiction in strategy which required attrition of PIRA [Provisional IRA] at the same time as winning Catholic popular support."[20] As a result, Catholic alienation grew and precipitated an end to the so-called "honeymoon" between the army and the Catholic working class. Thus, while the curfew and the imposition of internment without trial on August 9, 1971[21] may well have scored short-term successes against the IRA, they created pockets of long-term alienation within the minority Catholic population for the army.

Meanwhile, the IRA had grown steadily in size after internment and began to train and equip its members for the coming offensive with the troops. By the end of the year, parts of Belfast were proving deadly for British troops, with 11 soldiers killed in North Belfast and 10 in West Belfast alone.[22] The IRA was clearly training and equipping itself for a serious guerrilla push against the security forces. An uneasy coalition of interests, the IRA included conservative Roman Catholics, champions of ethnically exclusive nationalism, Marxist revolutionaries, and others who were united only by their commitment to the threefold objective of ending partition, ejecting British influence and uniting Ireland by "armed struggle."[23] Initially, the IRA lacked volunteers, weapons, and training. Some reports painted a picture of structural weakness in Belfast and Londonderry, which was exacerbated by the split in the organization in

December 1969.[24] However, there was no doubt that it had a few well-placed leadership figures[25] who were prepared to coordinate more sophisticated ambushes against military and police patrols, with one such attack perpetrated near the Rosemount police station in Londonderry on January 27, 1972 in which two RUC officers were killed.

Major General Robert Ford, the commander of Land Forces in Northern Ireland (and the second most senior officer in HQNI), was first to give his appreciation of the significant deterioration in the security situation in Londonderry at this time. Ford had arrived at "the conclusion that the minimum force necessary to achieve a restoration of law and order is to shoot selected ring leaders among the DYH [Derry Young Hooligans, a mob of rioters in the city], after clear warnings have been issued."[26] Though he was of the view that the army would be justified in using its standard issue 7.62mm ammunition, he suggested that a lower caliber round be found that was less lethal in an urban setting. Unfortunately, the army would not take delivery of an alternative weapon system until the following year when the baton gun (which discharged a rubber bullet) entered service. In the meantime, both army doctrine and training emphasized the employment of lethal force as a last resort, once clear warnings had been issued and as a direct consequence of well-aimed shots taken by individual soldiers who genuinely believed their lives were in immediate danger. It was a recipe for disaster but perhaps unavoidable in lieu of the fact that the RUC had neither the men nor the equipment to prevent an escalation of violence in public order scenarios at this time.

At the end of January, the 1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment, a unit that had last seen action in the Sheikh Othman district of Aden in 1967, was sent to Londonderry to mount an arrest operation. The events of Sunday January 30, 1972 would soon mark one of the peerless tragedies in Irish history. Following repeated attempts to prevent an illegal civil rights march, the military commanders in the army's 8 Brigade Headquarters authorized the forward deployment of 1 Para. The Paras' commanding officer, Derek Wilford—who had not held a command appointment in the Parachute Regiment before he assumed command of 1 Para in the closing months of 1971—ordered an arrest operation. In the space of one hour on the afternoon of January 30, his Support Company would have opened fire on unarmed men and women, wounding 27 and killing 13. The day would forever be known as "Bloody Sunday." Almost 40 years later, an inquiry set up to establish the truth of the events on that day found that, even though the soldiers opened fired "unjustifiably" on that day, "nothing that suggests to us that the cause or a contributory cause of this happening was either the role of the army in Northern Ireland at the time, the relationship of the army with the RUC, or indeed the plans made for dealing with the civil rights march and any accompanying rioting on January 30, 1972."[27] Importantly, Major General Ford openly

admitted to a journalist some years later that the military should not have been placed in overall command of the security forces campaign at the time, a position made worse by the ineffectiveness of the RUC to deal with the challenge posed by widespread public disorder, an upsurge in terrorism, and the damage done to morale by the IRA's targeted assassinations.

The effects of Bloody Sunday were devastating. More raw recruits joined the IRA across Northern Ireland and in Derry, and the nationalist population turned decisively against the military, who they had originally greeted as their protectors. A spike in violent attacks against the army and RUC soon followed, with a coordinated bombing campaign now underway across the province. The IRA was to surpass its earlier amateurish attacks by blitzing key infrastructural targets (such as transportation hubs) across Belfast on July 21, 1972. In a day that became known as "Bloody Friday," republican terrorists exploded 19 bombs inside a one mile radius in little over an hour. Nine people were killed and over 130 injured. Emboldened by the mood of despondency that had grown up in the Catholic community in the wake of the "Bloody Sunday" massacre, the IRA was operating with impunity.

This escalation of violence translated into a complementary series of attacks on security forces bases in other parts of Northern Ireland. In Londonderry, the army's forward operating base in the Bligh's Lane area, close to the border with the Irish Republic, was targeted by sustained gunfire on a nightly basis. Plotted adjacent to the Creggan Estate, a predominantly Catholic nationalist neighborhood, the army attempted to live among the people, but had by now become an unwelcome presence for many Catholic nationalists. Although military commanders were never as naive as to believe that their presence would restore law and order, they did feel that by holding ground it might act as a deterrent to terrorists. In the months leading up to and immediately following Bloody Sunday, Bligh's Lane was attacked several times a day. Attacks ranged from sniping to petrol bombing to car bombs being left outside the area where soldiers routinely patrolled. The army finally turned the tide on the terrorists when the government ordered the most decisive military operation to date in the form of Operation *Motorman* on July 31, 1972. In the largest military intervention since the Suez Crisis in 1956, the army dismantled barricades in no-go areas in Belfast and Londonderry, flooding the province with upward of 30,000 troops.

By the middle of 1972, soldiers were being put through their paces prior to deploying to Northern Ireland by a new training organization that demonstrated the ability of Britain's armed forces to adapt and innovate in ways that would see them respond more systematically to the armed challenge now laid down by the IRA. The formation of the Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Team (NITAT) was one of the most

important developments in military training for operations during Operation *Banner*. As Alastair Irwin and Mike Mahoney have usefully concluded, NITAT "delivered some of the most sharply focused and effective training that the army has ever received before an operational deployment."[28] Based initially in England and, with an additional unit established in Germany, NITAT training encompassed urban and rural patrolling drills, familiarization with terrorist weapons, structures and TTPs, as well as training on Rules of Engagement (ROE) for the use of lethal force and countersurveillance protocols. The intellectual agility demanded of soldiers was also important, a process already enhanced with Lieutenant General Sir Ian Freeland's request that two of his education officers establish cultural awareness courses for incoming units.[29] Although the army had initially marched up Shipquay Street in box formation on August 15, 1969 (the idea being that one could quell trouble by arresting ringleaders), it masks a deeper appreciation of the achievements of NITAT in these early years of Operation *Banner*.

THE MISSING OPERATIONAL LEVEL

Between 1971 and 1976, the IRA slowly took on the guise of an underground guerrilla army, thereafter settling into a "long war" by reorganizing into a cellular structure and transforming itself into more clandestine terrorist groupings. The thinking behind this shift in strategy had major operational repercussions for the IRA, as one senior strategist revealed:

> I suppose it came to a head in 1976 when the then leadership made some concessions and agreed to the formation of a Northern Command in late '76, which meant that a lot of autonomy was given away from GHQ towards the North, which tended to be people based in the North. And they set out to try and reorganise the IRA. And that was the story for a long, long time and that took years and years and years.[30]

There were several reasons behind this strategic shift, but the most important is probably the effects of the 1975 cease-fire on the IRA's operational capability and on the group's morale generally. The British government had effectively reached an accommodation with Southern-based IRA leaders that was perceived by volunteers in the north to have compromised the integrity of "armed struggle." Publicly, a younger leadership was now emerging to take control of the campaign against the British. Yet, behind-the-scenes not much had changed. Older republicans like Jimmy Drumm were still respected and venerated by the support base, to the extent that he was chosen to deliver a policy statement at Bodenstown in 1977 indicating, in one senior strategist's words: "where we would like to go politically but at the same time always trying to reassure

the base who did not like any resources directed anywhere else except toward getting guns in."[31] Yet, the decision to transform its operational art and opt for a new strategic "long war" was not solely in the IRA's gift and came about by a clever mixture of coercion, deterrence, and dialogue applied by the British state.

Perhaps the most far-reaching policies designed to alter the size and shape of the military commitment to Northern Ireland came in the mid-1970s when the Labour government moved to switch the operational focus of its security to one of "police primacy." Senior members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, who were also Special Branch officers, concluded that the military lead presented more challenges than opportunities. For example, after the outbreak of the Troubles, the police were largely discredited by the harsh, knee-jerk tactics they applied in public order situations. While the army were lauded as "peace-keepers," they often applied crude techniques to win over what some RUC officers referred to as "the village headman" or "gougers." But it was the disarming of the police and their resulting inability to deal with public disorder that allowed the army to dominate the security forces' response in the early 1970s.[32]

Within 18 months of his appointment as secretary of state, Merlyn Rees had prepared the ground for a shift in British security policy that would see police primacy reestablished.[33] It was not an easy shift, however, as he had been a fan of holding big security meetings at Stormont to which the RUC chief constable and his team would have to drive to from their headquarters in Knock in East Belfast. As a consequence, the Northern Ireland Office still held "tight control" of security matters.[34] In July 1976, Rees moved to lay down the terms of reference for the Ministerial Committee he himself convened to examine law and order in the province, which would

> examine the action and resources required for the next few years to maintain law and order in Northern Ireland, including how best to achieve the primacy of the Police; the size and role of locally recruited forces; and the progressive reduction of the Army as soon as is practicable.[35]

The Bourn Committee concluded that the army's role should be scaled back to provide military assistance to the police as and when required.[36] Despite Rees' "encouraging words on the publication of the security report," though, "relations between the army and the police were now deteriorating." Rees would subsequently admit that "while the army agreed in principle with police primacy, it was difficult for them to accept it in practice."[37]

A cabinet reshuffle in September 1976, under new prime minister James Callaghan, saw Rees succeeded at the NIO by Roy Mason, who had been

secretary of state for defense since 1974. He had already overseen the army's introduction of Special Forces into Northern Ireland but more than that advocated a strategic reorientation away from an overreliance on brute force and toward intelligence-led, surveillance operations. As he informed the House of Commons at the time, "I am hopeful that the SAS [Special Air Service], with its special skills, will, when fully deployed, make its impact, but it will not be sudden. It will take time."[38] In defending the use of Special Forces, he assured his colleagues that they would be operating primarily in South Armagh in uniform but on reconnoitering purposes only. It was a position agreed between Harold Wilson, Merlyn Rees, and Mason jointly and their deployment, he stated, would be for as long as the GOC required the advanced skills that the SAS brought with it in a hostile environment where terrorists often held the upper hand.

What is sometimes lost in the debate over the deployment of Special Forces is the important shift in attempts to create greater cooperation between the RUC and the police force in the Republic. Mason's first task was to implement the Bourn Committee's "Way Ahead" report. Mason shared the view of his predecessor by arguing that it was important "to create a political framework that would restore peace and stability to the province, thus making it possible for the British government to downscale its commitment to Northern Ireland." Yet, where he parted company with Rees was that he "did not believe that an institutional accommodation between the two communities was necessary to achieve this."[39] Fundamentally, perhaps, Mason did not share the views of those on the left wing of the Labour Party who argued that the only way to truly resolve the Northern Ireland "problem" was to withdraw British troops. Such irresponsible actions would have opened the door to catastrophe in Mason's view. As he told the House of Commons in December 1976:

> The RUC is now more effective, morale is high, recruiting is good, and the regional crime squads are really tackling the assassins. The Provisional IRA knows this, and so do the UVF and the UFF, and they are now struggling to find propaganda weapons against Her Majesty's Government. One of the problems is, of course, that they are now trying to operate with sniping tactics against the UDR when they are off duty, and the RUC and other security forces when they are on patrol. This is a British Government responsibility, and not one for the United Nations.[40]

It was the assessment that the Provisional IRA, in particular, was losing popular support in Catholic areas and that the time was now ripe for the RUC to take the lead in Security Force operations.

The shift in British security policy under Roy Mason had the immediate effect of integrating the army's command structure into a Security Policy Committee, over which the secretary of state for Northern

Ireland presided. The chief constable and GOC continued to meet on a weekly basis to decide operational matters. In a directive issued in the summer of 1977, the GOC's formal title changed from "Director of Operations" to "Director of Military Operations." It emphasized how:

> The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible for deciding the security policy to be followed in Northern Ireland. In your capacity as Director of Military Operations, you will:
>
> a. Advise him (or, where appropriate, his senior representative in Northern Ireland) on the military aspects of his responsibilities for security policy.
> b. Consult him (or, where appropriate, his senior representative in Northern Ireland) on all policy matters concerning the operations of the Armed Forces, and act in agreement with him on such matters.
>
> Should you disagree on military grounds with the views of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (or, where appropriate, his senior representative in Northern Ireland), you are to refer the matter to the Chief of the General Staff, who in turn will refer it if necessary to the Chief of the Defence Staff and the Secretary of State for Defence before a final decision is made.[41]

The directive had been agreed jointly by Sir Kenneth Newman, a former Special Branch detective in Palestine in the 1940s, who had replaced Jamie Flanagan as chief constable in May 1976. The directive was important in that it heralded a new departure from the government's reliance on a military-led counterinsurgency campaign (which was perceived as being something of a blunt instrument and not in line with the British belief in how a liberal democracy ought to respond to terrorism) to a law enforcement-led counterterrorism strategy, with the army now firmly in support.[42] The government had now shifted its focus to a civil-led strategy, where the aim was "to achieve the restoration of the rule of law by isolating the terrorists from their support in the community and prosecuting them as criminals through the courts."[43]

The implementation of this new security policy coincided with the appointment of a new GOC in November 1977, Lieutenant General Sir Timothy Creasey. Creasey was tasked with overseeing the "Way Ahead" policy and in particular the "gradual handing back of responsibility for security to the RUC."[44] Earlier in his career, Creasey had served with 39 Brigade on anti-Mau Mau operations in Kenya, returning with the brigade to conduct operations against the IRA in 1956, and led the 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, in Aden during the height of the Emergency.[45] Interestingly, Creasey's colonial experience did not endear him to Kenneth Newman, an unrepentant advocate for the agreed policy of Ulsterization. The continuing friction between Newman and Creasey was only loosened by a shakeup in the top-level leadership triggered by

a general election, when Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party won a majority of seats at Westminster in May 1979. Thatcher's initial assessment of security policy in Northern Ireland ensured that the Tories would continue with the policy of Ulsterization begun under the Wilson government and entrenched with the leadership of Prime Minister James Callaghan and Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason. The first major test came on August 31, 1979 when the Provisional IRA carried out two coordinated attacks from its safe haven in the Irish Republic. In County Donegal, it assassinated the former chief of the defense staff, Lord Louis Mountbatten, and in County Down blew up a convoy of British troops from the army's 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, a devastating attack in which 18 soldiers were killed. Mrs Thatcher refused to allow the army a free hand and immediately looked to the RUC to take the lead in follow-up operations. By now, however, the first step in the reorientation of security policy had been taken. The formation of the Tasking and Co-ordination Groups (TCGs) in 1978 saw the RUC take lead responsibility on all intelligence matters, with the military in close support.

By the early 1980s, the RUC and army were well on their way to working harmoniously. In his first speech as chief constable in February 1980, Jack Hermon told his audience: "We will be more professional. We will be more determined. We will be more vigorous."[46] Hermon sought to build up the RUC's own counterterrorist capability by forming an elite group of uniformed Special Branch officers—trained and equipped by the SAS[47]—who would work closely with the army's Special Forces on joint operations.[48]

WHEN THE ENEMY GETS A VOTE: THE IRA REASSESSES ITS STRATEGY

Around the same time, the IRA scored huge political successes when a clash between the prison authorities and republican prisoners over demands to wear their own clothing and organize themselves according to their own internal structure drew the British government into direct confrontation with the Provisional IRA. The net result was that Sinn Fein, the fledgling political wing of the IRA, ran the leader of the republican prisoners, Bobby Sands, in a by-election for the seat of Fermanagh and South Tyrone in the House of Commons, a contest he won. Support within the nationalist community was soon galvanized further when Sands died in the hunger strike he had been leading. In the Sinn Fein *Ard Fheis* (annual conference) of 1981, the party's director of publicity coined the phrase an "Armalite and ballot box" to ensure that the IRA gave the electoral strategy the space it needed to grow. Privately, many IRA figures were beginning to admit that the "armed struggle" was fruitless and

unlikely to garner the momentum needed to usher in British withdrawal, an end to partition, and a united Ireland.[49] Nevertheless, Sinn Fein continued to lobby for a British withdrawal. In its seminal position statement "Towards a United Ireland" in 1987, it laid out conditions that would contribute to this objective:

> Sinn Féin seeks to create conditions which will lead to a permanent cessation of hostilities, an end to our long war and the development of a peaceful, united and independent Irish society. Such objectives will only be achieved when a British government adopts a strategy for decolonisation.[50]

Meanwhile, Sinn Fein's bedfellows in the IRA were preparing to step up their strategy of "armed struggle" and intensify military operations against the Security Forces.

Even though several leading prisoners had begun to disagree with the IRA's strategy by the mid-1980s, the Provisionals nevertheless began to adapt their operational structure to escalate the intensity of their violence. The organization's operations officer in the late 1980s, Brendan Hughes, alleged that the IRA, under the tutelage of "Martin McGuinness and the rest of the GHQ staff" was planning "this major upsurge in the campaign: we were going to go in and take over [British] army billets and so forth, major operations involving major weapons." All that was "lacking was the training," he recalled.[51] Some dummy-run operations were undertaken. The most high-profile attack after the Loughgall ambush in May 1987 (a disaster in which eight of the organization's most ruthless terrorists were killed by Security Forces) was the attack by up to 12 IRA terrorists on the PVCP at Derryard, near Rosslea along the border with the Irish Republic. The IRA "flying column" responsible for the attack had modified a Bedford flatbed lorry and mounted a flame thrower and Browning machine gun on a tripod.[52] The terrorists threw grenades into the PVCP and fired RPG-7s at the soldiers. Two soldiers were killed and two others wounded. The lorry's blood-spattered floor suggested that two or three IRA men had been shot in the attack.

The media reported how the army would almost certainly initiate a review of border checkpoints and patrol bases,[53] which eventually led to a redesign of these installations. Not long afterward, the Provisionals mounted their first attack with what they called a "directional missile" guided by a command wire. The attack on an UDR patrol in Callanbridge, just outside Armagh City, saw one soldier killed and three wounded.[54] Two other attempts to shoot down helicopters in South Armagh led to one aircraft having to make an emergency landing. It was evident that the IRA was applying considerable pressure in the outlying counties now that the Security Forces were having greater success in Belfast and Londonderry. In another incident on May 31, 1991, a lorry bomb smashed

through the perimeter fence at Glenanne UDR base in County. The IRA had loaded it with a 2,000 lb bomb, one of the largest ever exploded in the province, and drove it into the base. Three soldiers were killed in the attack and scores injured. Six soldiers and a civilian had died in two other lorry or proxy bomb attacks on PVCPs in and around Newry. However, with Brendan Hughes' doubts on the feasibility of the so-called "Tet Offensive," the IRA's Northern Command was effectively backed into a corner to accept the political trajectory or return to war. This placed the organization in a quandary, especially since the Derry Brigade had been the first to call a cease-fire mainly because of the pressure being exerted from the IRA's support base in the city.

Significantly, there has been some dispute over whether the IRA was really that determined to see through its new "Tet offensive" or whether it sought to give the impression that it was more deadly than it really was prior to signaling an end to its armed struggle. The split that opened up in the wake of the IRA's announcement of a "complete cessation of hostilities" on August 31, 1994 opened the door to criticism that the leadership under Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams was running the IRA down in the late 1980s. Brendan Hughes recalled how the IRA was "in disarray."[55] Despite an upsurge in Provisional IRA operations, a twin-track approach was already underway that would eventually lead to the Provisionals taking a decision to abandon the move toward escalation of its terrorism and instead plump for peace.

What is often forgotten in accounts of military operations in Northern Ireland is just how agile the army became by the 1980s. As an organization, it responded intellectually and physically to the threat posed by IRA terrorism. Establishing the IRA's tactical and operational *modus operandi* proved relatively straightforward; however, ascertaining what its strategic intent actually was proved more difficult. However, much of the dangerous work was being undertaken at community level. Interactions between the community and army were utterly transformed by the work of peace advocates in Londonderry. The so-called "Derry Experiment," although an independent and organic attempt to de-escalate tensions, was meant to compliment secret negotiations, not replace them. Mainly focused at the tactical and operational levels, it could not have succeeded without the risks taken at the strategic level by political leaders and those commanding illegal organizations. Just as the IRA's strategic decisions were constrained by the actions of Britain and its security forces in the late 1970s, so moves toward peace on the ground involving the military could only be facilitated by a lessening of the grip of the Provisionals on their support base.

Writing about events in Londonderry at the time, the distinguished Irish historian Roy Foster concluded rather damningly:

There have been successes in Northern Ireland. The city of Derry, scene of Bloody Sunday, is today described in glossy airline magazines as a "showpiece", bursting with enterprise, its streets empty of soldiers. However, this is due not only to the heroic efforts of community leaders but to a demographic shift amounting to voluntary re-segregation. And in the other areas too where there is hope for the future such as achievements in housing, education, cross-community cultural initiatives it has nothing to do with the Army's record. Soldiers are not, after all, trained to police civic communities, much less bring them together. In Northern Ireland as elsewhere, the best they can usually do is keep or even drive them apart.[56]

Dismissing the army's public relations presentation of their role as "uniformly disastrous," he went on to suggest that the army "could not win as it was tossed about in the propaganda war." While it is certainly true that the visible presence of the military on the streets conjured up symbols of deep resentment for the nationalist community, the army was successful in adapting to its new role of supporting a policing lead. Foster's uninformed view of events further betrayed the ability of grassroots actors to work for peace in the city.

The truth of the matter was that community activists, soldiers, and republican representatives were by now taking positive steps toward peace. Individual commanders on the ground took bold and innovative steps on their own "patch" and the importance of trust in the personalities involved meant that it could only happen with the backing of senior officials in the background. Strategically, there were more clandestine moves toward peace too, though these had historically been undertaken away from the limelight and pursued by officials from the security services, important intermediaries, and their contacts in the IRA.[57] There is a well-worn view of the peace process that the Provisional IRA called a cease-fire for magnanimous reasons. In fact, recent research has taken a different view by arguing that the organization had long since recognized the disastrous consequences of terrorism but that it could not back down without accepting the reality that it had been defeated.[58]

TOWARD AN ENDGAME IN IRELAND

The strategic processes underway within the various terrorist groups was soon matched with a complete overhaul of the British state's security apparatus. The Security Policy Meeting may have made the strategic decisions on a recurrent basis but the day-to-day decisions were being made at the operational interface between the TCGs and—by the early 1990s—the Province Executive Committee (PEC), which coordinated and fused all intelligence gathered in Northern Ireland. High-level coordination now took place between civil, military, policing, and intelligence

representatives in an organization jointly chaired initially by the deputy chief constable and the CLF. Looking back over the Troubles, many Special Branch officers expressed the view that "it was only when all intelligence agencies worked together that we beat the IRA and pushed them to the table."[59] By 1992, MI5 was now taking over lead responsibility for countering IRA terrorism from the Metropolitan Police Special Branch on a national basis.[60] There was speculation in the press that a secret deal was being drawn up between security officials in the province in the summer of 1993, which would see a drawdown in army patrols in nationalist areas and fewer searches for republican prisoners. A rumor had even arisen that a "peace party" was developing within the Provisionals led by Adams and McGuinness.[61] Leaked details of the plan were condemned by Unionist politicians, such as Ken Maginnis, who stated that, "All our experience shows the only way we can deal with the IRA is to first win a decisive military advantage over them. The government should settle down to the task of defeating the terrorists and leave aside risky plans like this."[62] The reality was somewhat different. General Sir Roger Wheeler recalls that when he was appointed GOC in late January 1993, "other than the fact that Paddy Mayhew made his speech in Coleraine . . . that there was no sign of any kind of peace process on the surface." On an operational basis, soldiers and police officers continued to apply themselves to the government's policy of defeating terrorism. At a higher level, there had been such a dramatic improvement in cooperation between the security forces that "there wasn't really a cigarette paper between the police and the army."[63]

By the mid-1990s, Sinn Fein had begun to dominate the republican movement to such an extent that the Irish Republican Army became subordinate to the wishes of Gerry Adams' leadership. Although the triumph of the Adams' camp was to result in the IRA returning to war in the face of Britain's refusal to admit Sinn Fein to peace talks, the election of New Labour in 1997 ensured that a more favorable set of circumstances prevailed. The IRA returned to its cease-fire in 1997—despite a further split in its ranks—and would remain in being as Sinn Fein became key participants in all-party talks that culminated in the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in April 1998. Although the agreement saw a return to locally based devolution and a power-sharing arrangement between Unionists and Nationalists, the IRA did not decommission all of its weapons and ordnance until 2005 when it finally announced an end of its long war. By 2007, Sinn Fein overtook its rivals in the Social Democratic and Labour Party and agreed a deal to share power with the Democratic Unionist Party, now the dominant force in Unionist politics. In turn, this political stability precipitated the end of the army's 38-year military campaign in support of the Civil Power in 2007.[64]

CONCLUSION: WAS COUNTERINSURGENCY A SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

It is common for commentators to see Northern Ireland as perhaps the most successful military campaign in a litany of counterinsurgency triumphs through the postwar period. However, this chapter has suggested that even though it was a much clearer success than say Kenya or Cyprus, it had the potential to end in failure. Had the military not been prepared to accept its constitutional obligations and follow the lead provided by the RUC from the late 1970s, a very different outcome could have emerged. The chapter has also challenged the fixation by counterinsurgent theorists and republican strategists on individual commanders like General Sir Frank Kitson, whose theories may well have been discussed by the British officer corps in the 1970s, but no more so than the likes of Mao Tse Tung, George Grivas, or Che Guevara. Moreover, the only clear evidence of Kitson's theories having been adopted in the form of the MRF became a military and political disaster and threw into sharp relief the case that soldiers were adhering to the more common principles of British counterinsurgency, which included adherence to the rule of law and the proportionate use of force. Nevertheless, while the MRF did not yield the intelligence necessary to cripple the IRA, it did lay the foundations for the RUC Special Branch to return to Catholic nationalist areas still deeply hostile to the military.

This chapter has focused on a strategic reading of British military involvement in Northern Ireland. However, it has argued that one cannot make a decisive judgment on the successes and failures of the British response to terrorism without taking into account the strategic learning processes underway inside the counterinsurgent force and its opponents. Without factoring in the strategic interplay between states and nonstate military actors, it is impossible truly to understand the nature of an armed conflict such as the one that raged in Northern Ireland between the 1960s and the 1990s.

NOTES

1. The views expressed here are the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the Ministry of Defence, or any other UK government agency.

2. G. F. R. Henderson, *The Science of War: A Collection of Essays and Lectures, 1892–1903*, edited by Captain Neill Malcolm (London: Longmans, 1905), 50.

3. J. F. C. Fuller, *The Dragon's Teeth: A Study of War and Peace* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1932), 304–5.

4. MoD, British Army Staff College Notes on Counterinsurgency, dated July 4, 1994.

5. For further reading on the strategic dimension and the role of the military in the Northern Ireland conflict, see: M. L. R. Smith, "The Intellectual Internment of a Conflict: The Forgotten War in Northern Ireland," *International Affairs* 75, no. 1 (1999): 77–97; Christopher Bass and M. L. R. Smith "The Dynamic of Irwin's Forgotten Army: A Strategic Understanding of the British Army's Role in Northern Ireland after 1998," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 15, no. 3 (2004): 1–27; Huw, Bennett, "From Direct Rule to Motorman: Adjusting British Military Strategy for Northern Ireland in 1972," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33, no. 6 (2009): 511–32; Aaron Edwards, "Deterrence, Coercion and Brute Force in Asymmetric Conflict: The Role of the Military Instrument in Resolving the Northern Ireland 'Troubles,'" *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 4, no. 3 (2011): 226–41.

6. Andrew, Mumford, *The Counter-insurgency Myth: The British Experience of Irregular Warfare* (London: Routledge, 2012), 1.

7. Thomas Mockaitis, *British Counter-insurgency in the Post-Imperial Era* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), Chapter 6. See also Aaron Edwards, *Defending the Realm? The Politics of Britain's Small Wars since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012) and Douglas Porch, *Counter-insurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

8. Warren Chin, "From Belfast to Lashkar Gar via Basra: British Counterinsurgency Today," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (London: Routledge, 2012), 276. The original doctrine that outlines how troops should operate in an Internal Security environment is: MoD, *Land Operations: Volume III—Counter-Revolutionary Operations, Part 2—Internal Security*, Army Code No. 70516, Part 2 (London: HMSO, November 26, 1969) and MoD, *Land Operations: Volume III—Counter-Revolutionary Operations, Part 2—Procedures and Techniques*, Army Code No. 70516, Part 2 (London: HMSO, 1977). However, this was only consulted in addition to the army's variety of tactical Aid Memoires relating to other aspects of military activity in Northern Ireland.

9. Bennett, "From Direct Rule to Motorman," 511–32. See also Edwards, *Defending the Realm?* for a more comprehensive analysis of the strategic and operational lessons being learned, which eventually paved the way for British security forces' successes.

10. John Newsinger, "From Counter-insurgency to Internal Security: Northern Ireland, 1969–1992," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 6, no. 1 (1995): 88–111.

11. For example, of the total number of people killed by republican terrorists between 1969 and 2002, 981 were from the Protestant community, 446 from the Catholic community, and 631 not from Northern Ireland (most of these individuals were British soldiers), while loyalist terrorists killed 734 people from the Catholic community, 232 people from the Protestant community, and 60 people not from Northern Ireland. Figures taken from Malcolm Sutton Index of Deaths on the CAIN Web site. Archived at: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/cgi-bin/tab3.pl

12. See Paul Wilkinson, "The Role of the Military in Combating Terrorism in a Democratic Society," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 8, no. 3 (1996): 1–11.

13. Imperial War Museum, Papers of General Sir Ian Freeland, 79/34/3, Press Conference, October 22, 1969.

14. House of Commons Debates (Hansard), April 7, 1970, Vol. 799, Col. 263.

15. A. Edwards, "Misapplying Lessons Learned? Analysing the Utility of British Counter-insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland, 1971–76," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 21, no. 2 (June 2010): 303–30.

16. David Benest, "Aden to Northern Ireland, 1966–76" in Hew Strachan, ed., *Big Wars and Small Wars: The British Army and the Lessons of War in the Twentieth Century* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 115–44.

17. See Correlli Barnett, *Britain and Her Army, 1509–1970: A Military, Political and Social Survey* (London: Allen Lane, 1970), 493.

18. Colm Campbell and Ita Connolly, "A Model for the 'War against Terrorism?' Military Intervention in Northern Ireland and the 1970 Falls Curfew," *Journal of Law and Society* 30, no. 2 (2003): 341–75.

19. IWM, Freeland Papers, 79/34/3, Confidential—IS Operations Northern Ireland since April 1969.

20. Huw Bennett, "'Smoke without Fire?' Allegations against the British Army in Northern Ireland, 1972–5," *Twentieth Century British History* 24, no. 2 (June 2013): 280. This point is not new and, in fact, was made 16 years earlier in Kennedy-Pipe, Caroline, and Colin McInnes, "The British Army in Northern Ireland, 1969–1972: From Policing to Counter-Terror," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 20, no. 2 (1997): 11–12.

21. The most in-depth research on internment without trial has concluded that of the 512 names of individuals singled out for arrest 200 would have been considered members of the Provisional IRA, thereby contradicting the orthodox narrative of Operation Demetrius as being based on poor intelligence. For further discussion on Internment, see Martin J. McCleery, "Debunking the Myths of Operation Demetrius: The Introduction of Internment in Northern Ireland in 1971," *Irish Political Studies* 27, no. 3 (September 2012): 411–30.

22. Statistics taken from the invaluable CAIN Sutton Database of Deaths. Archived at http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/chron/1971.html. Accessed December 19, 2013. The third most dangerous place for British soldiers in 1971 was Londonderry where nine soldiers were killed. For contextualization of the dynamics of military engagement at this time, see Andrew Sanders and Ian S. Wood, *Times of Troubles: Britain's War in Northern Ireland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 59.

23. For more on the IRA, see Richard, English, *Armed Struggle: A History of the IRA* (London: Macmillan, 2003) and Kacper Rekawek, *Irish Republican Terrorism and Politics: A Comparative Study of the Official and the Provisional IRA* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).

24. The IRA split was prompted by the alleged failure of the Marxist-inspired leadership in Dublin to provide weapons and personnel in the defense of Catholic working class communities across Belfast and Londonderry. At a special Ard Fheis (conference), the dissidents who walked out of the meeting were known as the Provisional IRA, while those who stayed became known as the Official IRA. Their associates in Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, also split. See Rekawek, *Irish Republican Terrorism and Politics*, 11–13.

25. For more on this point see Sanders and Wood, *Times of Troubles*, 60.

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60. Stewart Tendler and Jill Sherman, "MI5 to Lead Fight Against IRA," *The Times*, May 9, 1992.

61. Liam Clarke, "Minister's Secret Peace Plan with IRA," *The Sunday Times*, August 22, 1993.

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CHAPTER 10

Battling the *Mujahideen*: Soviet Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, 1979–89

Gregory Fremont-Barnes

INTRODUCTION

Its significance often overlooked, the Soviet-Afghan War stands as one of the seminal events of the last quarter of the twentieth century, for in less than a decade it exposed fatal defects in the Soviet political structure as well as in communist ideology itself, helped trigger and sustain the policy of internal reform led by Mikhail Gorbachev from 1986, contributed strongly to the collapse of the Communist Party and the consequent end to the Cold War and, finally, played a decisive contributing role in the disintegration of the USSR.[1] The conflict rapidly involved other nations with strong political interests at stake in Central Asia, not least the United States, which clandestinely siphoned billions of dollars in aid to the *Mujahideen* through Pakistan, which itself strongly supported not only the resistance in general, but particularly those factions of religious extremists who in the wake of Soviet withdrawal took a prominent part in the internecine struggle between rival *Mujahideen* factions, which ultimately led to the Taliban's triumph in the autumn of 1996 over more moderate groups during the continuing civil war that followed Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.[2]

The international implications soon became apparent: quite apart from the horrific wave of repression that their regime unleashed, the Taliban offered Afghanistan as a training and recruiting ground for other extremist groups whose political and ideological agenda stretched far beyond

the borders of their war-ravaged country. In short, by hosting *al-Qaida* on Afghan soil, the Taliban set the seeds for the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which in turn triggered a devastating reaction from the United States and the United Kingdom, soon followed by other NATO powers. All of this "Pandora's box" may be traced to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the ghastly war it inaugurated.

In no small sense, the foundations of a full understanding of the West's involvement in Afghanistan today must rest upon a firm grasp of the causes, course, and outcome of the Soviet-Afghan War—the lessons of which confirmed the folly that inevitably befalls a superpower pursuing unrealistic political aims with armed forces unable to cope with the unconventional methods of an adversary, which, though vastly disadvantaged in weapons and technology, managed to overcome the odds through sheer tenacity and an unswerving devotion to freedom and its faith.[3]

In 1979, political leaders in Moscow directed a sceptical military to intervene in the Afghan civil war in order to maintain in power a nominally communist regime in Kabul struggling against a resistance movement of disparate groups known collectively as the *Mujahideen*. Deeply unpopular with large swathes of rural, deeply conservative, tribal peoples stretched across a country divided on religious, ethnic, and tribal lines, President Taraki's government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) controlled only urban areas and very little of the countryside, where tribal elders and clan chiefs held sway. Even within the Communist Party apparatus, rival factions grappled for sole control of the affairs of state, denying them the time or ability to implement the socialist reforms they espoused, including the emancipation of women, land redistribution, and the dismantling of traditional structure for society in favor of a more egalitarian alternative. None of these reforms resonated with a traditional, Islamic nation whose opposition manifested its outrage in open civil war. The president was overthrown by his own prime minister—a member of the opposing communist faction—who proved even less effective at imposing rule than his predecessor. Lack of political direction and anger at unwanted reforms precipitated mutinies and mass desertions within the army and outbreaks of bloody revolt in cities, towns, and villages across the country, which the Soviets immediately appreciated as a threat to their influence over a neighbouring state sharing a border with three of the USSR's Muslim republics.[4]

Leonid Brezhnev, the Communist Party General Secretary of the Soviet Union, concerned at the disintegrating situation in Afghanistan and determined to maintain a sphere of influence over the region, ordered an invasion. As neither the climate nor the terrain suited Soviet equipment or tactics, the sheer size of the endeavour became daunting. When Soviet troops rolled over the border in December 1979 ostensibly in aid of a

surrogate government in Kabul, they expected to conduct a brief, largely bloodless campaign with highly sophisticated mechanized and airborne forces, easily crushing Afghan resistance in a matter of months before enabling a newly installed government to tackle the resistance thereafter. The Soviets never intended to remain long in Afghanistan and their relatively small troop numbers attested to this fact. Nor, despite Western fears, did the invasion represent the belated realization of the historic Russian drive to establish a warm-water port on the Indian Ocean. Theirs was to be a temporary—albeit an internationally condemned—presence.[5]

Yet the Soviets comprehensively failed to appreciate the quagmire into which they found themselves; their forces possessed very limited combat experience—and none at all in counterinsurgency—and they foolishly assumed their successful interventions in East Germany in 1954, in Hungary in 1956, and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 offered models for any military endeavour posed against a popular struggle. Western analysts, too, predicted Soviet victory, but the political and military circumstances behind the interventions behind the Iron Curtain offered no parallels with Afghanistan, for unlike the Soviets' client states in Eastern Europe, Afghanistan stood embroiled in the midst of a civil war, not a simple effectively unarmed, insurrection—and thus applying simple, albeit overwhelming, military might could only guarantee protection for the central government in Kabul and perhaps control of larger cities and towns—but not the countryside. The Soviet intervention in December 1979 achieved its initial objective with predictable ease: elite troops overthrew the government, seized the presidential palace and key communications centers, killed the president, and replaced him with a Soviet-sponsored successor.

The plan thereafter seemed straightforward: stabilize the political situation, strengthen, re-train, and enlarge the Afghan Army to enable it to quell the insurgency on its own meanwhile performing the more passive roles of garrison duty and protecting the country's key infrastructure such as major roads, dams, and sources of electricity and gas. Thus, within three years, the Soviets confident in the notion that—armed with the continued presence of their advisors including army officers; KGB personnel; and civilian specialists in engineering, medicine, education, and other spheres, and furnished with a continuous supply of arms and technology, the Afghan government could stand on its own feet—their forces could withdraw across the border, leaving a friendly, stable, compliant, and ideologically like-minded regime firmly in power behind them.

None of these objectives stood up to the reality of the situation, however, for the civil war continued to spiral beyond the government's ability to suppress it, the Afghan Army's morale plummeted further, decreasing further its operational effectiveness and worrying Moscow that withdrawing its troops would amount to both humiliation and the collapse

of all Soviet influence over its former client state. Thus, what began as a fairly simple military operation—overthrowing a government and occupying key positions throughout the country—which the Soviet military, trained in large-scale, high-tempo operations, could manage with ease, soon developed into a protracted, costly, and ultimately unwinnable scenario, pitting small, ill-armed, but highly motivated guerrilla forces employing fighting methods bearing no relation to those practiced by opponents trained and armed to fight in central Europe against forces of similar organization and doctrine. Experience soon demonstrated the limited efficacy of heavy infantry, tanks, artillery, and jet fighters in a struggle that demanded more helicopter gunships, more heliborne troops, and more Special Forces in the fluid nature of the war conducted by the *Mujahideen*.[6]

As the years passed and the casualties steadily mounted, the war graphically exposed the weaknesses of the Soviets' strategy and the poorly suited structure of their armed forces, which never succeeded in overcoming an ever-growing resistance movement operating over a vast, varied, and exceedingly challenging landscape. Indeed, both Soviet tactics and strategy contained fatal flaws. Their doctrine directed the use of armored and motor rifle units to advance along narrow axes, maintaining secure lines of communication while wreaking destruction upon any resistance they encountered through combined arms; that is, the coordination of firepower offered by infantry, armor, and air assault units. With little experience or training in a counterinsurgency role, the Soviet armed forces chose a simplistic approach to the problem: simply clearing territory in their path, which translated into the widespread killing of civilians as well as resistance fighters who avoided where possible the superior weight of fire that their opponents could bring to bear. Everywhere circumstances appeared to confirm Alexander the Great's dictum that "One can occupy Afghanistan, but one cannot vanquish her."

Civilians who survived the onslaught naturally fled, embittered, abandoning their destroyed villages and property behind. Such ruthless exploitation of air and artillery power was deliberately meant to clear areas, particularly along the border with Pakistan, so as to deprive the resistance of recruits and local support as well as to aid in the interdiction of supplies crossing over into Afghanistan. This strategy resulted in a horrendous cost in human suffering: only six months after the Soviet invasion, approximately 800,000 Afghans had fled into Pakistan.

At the outset of the war the Soviets' strategy involved persuading the population to support the communist-led Kabul government, thus denying the resistance of aid within the anonymity of the provinces. This soon proved unrealistic, not least owing to the regime's heavy-handed measures; they then turned to denying the insurgents supplies, which led to driving civilians off their land or destroying their livelihoods as a warning

to withhold their support from the insurgency. This also involved interdicting supply routes that connected the insurgents to the vital matériel moving through Pakistan, the principal source of aid to the *Mujahideen*. The Soviets mounted numerous substantial operations against areas known to be actively supporting the resistance and to sever supply lines whenever possible, but the "drip, drip" effect caused by the guerrillas' constant ambushes, sniping, raids, and mined roads ultimately inflicted unsustainable losses on the 40th Army.

The Soviet-Afghan War differed from other conflicts of the Cold War era. True, like other conflicts of the post-1945 period, it constituted a limited one; but it was longer—slightly over nine years in length—and thus did not share the decisive nature of the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, or 1973. The Soviet *imbroglio* lacked the scale of either the Korean War (1950–53) or Vietnam (1965–73) and did not conclude with a clear political outcome, in contrast to those proxy conflicts. Nor can it be seen as some sort of Soviet "Vietnam," especially in terms of scale. The Soviets never deployed anything approaching the numbers the Americans sent to southeast Asia, with over half a million personnel by 1968, compared with the average of approximately 100,000 Soviets who served at any given time in Afghanistan. Whereas the Americans conducted numerous operations involving several divisions, the Soviets' entire 40th Army in Afghanistan consisted of a mere five divisions, four independent brigades, and four independent regiments, plus various small support units. Numbers as insufficient as these denied the Soviets—by their own faulty strategic calculations—any realistic chance of securing over 20 provincial centers plus various key industrial sites—to say nothing of the manpower required to secure whole swathes of remote and practically inaccessible territory inhabited by a seething population giving aid to elusive, seldom visible, opponents who moved by stealth, struck at will, and melted back into civilian life with little or no trace. Protection demanded of hundreds of miles of roads, communication lines, and points of strategic importance—some of which the Soviets must occupy outright or, at the very least, deny to the *Mujahideen*—placed a colossal burden on the invaders, who failed to appreciate both the sheer scale of the enterprise and the immense commitment in manpower it required.[7]

Opposing Forces

Soviet Forces and Their DRA Allies

The 40th Army served as the mainstay of the Soviets' military presence in Afghanistan, augmented by the 103rd Airborne Division, which consisted of four regiments, one based around Kabul airfield, a second near the Afghan government residence in Kabul, a third in the Bala Hissar

fortress on the outskirts of Kabul, and a fourth at Bagram air base, just northeast of the capital. Although Soviet forces varied in number, they averaged around 100,000 men in Afghanistan at any given time. These troops never intended to play the leading role in subduing the Afghan insurgency—that was to remain the primary responsibility of the DRA Army—and never anticipated the scale of the enterprise triggered by their appearance on Afghan soil. As a consequence, and by the Kremlin's steadfast adherence to the original notion that the 40th Army remain a "limited contingent," these troops failed to establish the really substantial presence in the country that subsequent events rendered so necessary. Moreover, with their armed forces structured, equipped, and trained to operate on the northern European plan (or Central Front in NATO parlance), or alternatively on the plains of northern China as the most likely battlegrounds of the future, Soviet strategists expected to conduct fast-paced conventional operations. They certainly did not expect to conduct a low-intensity, asymmetric war in Central Asia and thus their force structure, weaponry, and tactics necessarily underwent substantial alteration—a program which of course took time to implement.[8]

Broadly speaking, Soviet troops undertook four types of military action in Afghanistan. The first consisted of major operations conducted by both regular and Special Forces, including artillery and aircraft, and generally in conjunction with DRA units, the purpose being to destroy large groups of *Mujahideen* in particular areas of the country. Soviet commanders conducted these operations in phases lasting for several weeks or longer. The second type of operation was carried out on a smaller scale, perhaps by a single regiment with artillery and aircraft in support. This type of operation focussed on destroying a specific group of rebels in a location discovered via intelligence-gathering. Such operations tended to be conducted in 10 days or less. Thirdly, while such combat missions were under way, units "combed" villages in search of finding concealed weapons cache or medical aid stations. Fourth, small units—often company-sized—conducted ambushes along roads, on mountain trails, and near villages, with locations selected on the basis of intelligence gleaned by Afghan intelligence personnel.

Nonetheless, to a considerable extent the Soviets remained shackled to the methods they knew and understood—large-scale operations in the form of conventional offensives, which they continued to launch regularly, most notably in the Panjshir Valley, despite generally poor results, since none of these major operations achieved more than temporarily neutralising resistance activity in the areas over which the Soviets' ponderous military machine operated. True, experience revealed that heliborne forces operating in conjunction with mechanized forces could function effectively at the battalion and brigade level, but such methods tended to stifle tactical success when carried out on a divisional or larger scale.

In short, counterinsurgency depends on highly mobile, well-led, well-trained, and suitably equipped forces capable of fighting insurgents by employing their own methods. Soviet armor, airpower, and heavily laden infantry dependent on their armored personnel carriers (APCs) for transport over difficult terrain could not, despite their impressive firepower, compensate for their inherent shortcomings in a counterinsurgency environment, for the *Mujahideen* seldom appeared in concentration—and disappeared before Soviet troops could bring that overwhelming firepower to bear.

The heavily mountainous terrain of Afghanistan—though the country consists of extensive areas of dry plains, deserts, and "green zones" of river valleys and vegetation, as well—strongly influenced the strategy adopted by the Soviets, obliging their commanders to convey troops to an operational area via helicopters or convoys. Whenever possible, they sent troops ahead of the main body or inserted advance parties of troops by helicopter on to high ground so as to cover those following behind. Yet this of course depended on the availability of such aircraft, required proper planning, and exposed the limited number of helicopters to ground fire, especially rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) and Stingers.

Close to the larger cities and along frequently travelled roads the Soviets established permanent posts consisting of garrisons of between 15 and 40 troops. They controlled the area, guarded the roads, and guided artillery fire. Owing to their isolation, they could call on help via radio. Some of the most successful Soviet operations involved combined operations including air assault forces in support of a mechanized ground attack. Helicopters bearing small contingents of these troops would insert them deep in the rear and flanks of resistance strongholds to pin them, prevent their withdrawal, destroy their bases, and threaten or cut off their lines of communication. Ground forces would then advance to join up with these heliborne forces and engage trapped *Mujahideen* forces and destroy them with superior firepower. Heliborne forces performed best when inserted no deeper behind rebel lines than the distance of supporting artillery range, unless of course their own guns accompanied them. Operations undertaken without artillery support often ended in high casualties for the Soviets.

As guerrillas received and employed new weaponry and developed new tactics, they obliged the Soviets to adapt in turn. For a large conventional force already trying to cope with shifting political circumstances in the country, this pressure proved an unwelcome addition to their existing woes, demanding as it did new approaches to seemingly intractable problems in the field—not simply the modification of tactics, but variations to uniforms, weapons, and equipment to suit charging requirements.

The 40th Army comprised a professional cadre of officers and other ranks, but conscripts and reservists—frequently, like so many American draftees destined for service in Vietnam in the 1960s, reluctant or

downright unwilling to serve in a war whose purpose they did understand in a country about which they knew nothing—formed the bulk of this formation. "We were drafted at age eighteen," the disillusioned Vladislav Tamarov recalled. "We had no choice. If you weren't in college, if you weren't disabled, if your parents didn't have a lot of money—then you were required to serve. Some young men broke their legs, some paid money [for exemption from service]. . ." Those with time on their hands, such as the thousands of soldiers based in rear areas involved in maintenance, logistics, or communications, could easily fall prey to narcotics addiction—heroine of course being readily available in a country where poppies flourished—with predictable effects on morale, though to be fair home-sickness and boredom afflicted rear units more than drug-taking.

Naturally, the Soviets possessed elite forces, as well, but never in adequate numbers. While, for instance, ground reconnaissance troops tended to be better trained and of a higher quality than the typical conscript belonging to a motorized rifle unit, the critical shortage of high-quality infantry led the Soviets often to employ reconnaissance personnel in combat rather than in reconnaissance roles. This, in turn, detracted from the duty of intelligence-gathering on the ground, which commanders foolishly substituted by relying too heavily on intelligence acquired though aerial reconnaissance, radio intercepts, and what little access they had to agents in the field. These sources did not always yield much of tactical use and by assigning reconnaissance units to combat duties the Soviets neglected to make best use of their skills and consequently frequently failed to locate *Mujahideen* forces. The most famous elite forces were the *Spetsnaz* or "forces of special designation," highly trained special forces used in long-range reconnaissance, commando, and special force functions such as night-time ambushes; they would be helicoptered in and then proceed on foot to the ambush point, there to lay in wait for their unsuspecting victims.

Most of the infantry carried the AK-47 (7.62 mm), while airborne forces carried the AKS-74 (5.45 mm)—the latter creating more substantial injury. Soviet heavy weapons included two kinds of rocket launchers: the GRAD ("hail") and the URAGAN ("hurricane"). Smaller weapons included the DShKs—a heavy machine gun—as well as guided missile launchers, unguided NURS missiles, SHMELs, and mortars. The Soviets deployed various types of aircraft, including the MIG fighter, SU and AN aircraft, as well as Mi-8 helicopters for the transport of troops, ammunition, water, and food. Combat helicopters included the Mi-24 gunship, which could provide rapid and accurate firepower for ground attack as well as for covering troops. These proved extremely effective against the resistance and were greatly feared; on the other hand, they suffered from vulnerabilities like all weapon systems, and as helicopters are most vulnerable when they are on the ground or hovering over a position, the *Mujahideen* tended

to achieve reasonable success against such aircraft if they caught them in range while landing or disembarking troops.[9]

The forces of the DRA did not enjoy much respect from their Soviet counterparts—and for good reason. Afghan officers could apply for training in a Soviet military college, sometimes within Afghanistan or occasionally in the Soviet Union itself, but they seldom reached a high standard. Apart from volunteers, ordinary soldiers were often acquired by the crude method of virtual kidnapping: troops entered a village and rounded up men of appropriate age. Exceedingly high rates of desertion and numerous instances of DRA soldiers selling their Soviet-supplied weapons to the resistance did nothing to enhance their appalling reputation.[10] Vladimir Tamarov probably reflected the opinion of many of his comrades when he recorded this disparaging impression:

> Frankly, they were lousy soldiers. They tried to stay behind us and were never in a hurry to overtake us. There was nothing surprising about this: many of them, like many of us, were not in this war of their own free will. We had nothing to lose but our lives, but they were fighting their *own* people on their *own* land. Our newspapers depicted them as brave and valiant warriors defending their revolution. There were some volunteers who fought on our side to avenge the deaths of their families murdered by the Mujahadeen. Just as there were those who fought on the side of the Mujahadeen to avenge the death of families killed by our shelling. This is what a civil war is about.[11]

Mujahideen *Forces*[12]

The *Mujahideen* tended to avoid direct contact with Soviet forces of superior numbers and firepower lest they risk annihilation. Unlike the Soviets, they very rarely fought from fixed positions and if threatened with encirclement simply withdrew. Similarly, in the grand tradition of guerrilla operations, the *Mujahideen* always sought to achieve advantage through the element of surprise. They benefited enormously from local, intimate knowledge of the ground, possessed years of experience in scouting and reconnaissance-gathering and could transmit intelligence on the movement and strength of Soviet units in rapid fashion and across substantial distances by crude but effective means, including signalling devices that the Soviets could neither interpret nor suppress. The *Mujahideen* were extremely adept at night-fighting, rapid movement, and virtually undetected movement over difficult terrain, and in maintaining a large network of intelligence-gatherers across the country.

Boys as young as 11 or 12, carrying Kalashnikovs, fought, together with their fathers and grandfathers, out of various motives, in rare exceptions simply for money but overwhelmingly for the sake of defending their country. Without question, fighting on behalf of *Jihad* or Holy War,

motivated most of them. As one fighter explained to Sandy Gall, a British journalist travelling with the *Mujahideen*,

> *Jihad* embraces the whole Muslim world. All Muslims are obliged to take part in it by sending money, or demonstrating their support in some other way. Any writer or poet should write only about the *Jihad*. A merchant should work longer hours to make money for the *Jihad*. Not to take part in *Jihad* is a sin.

A small minority served in the *Mujahideen* out of compulsion: fighters simply arrived at a village and threatened to destroy the houses unless men came forward to serve in their ranks, a process that simultaneously prevented DRA forces from adopting the same practice. The number of *Mujahideen* actively engaged in fighting varied, but an estimated 85,000 served during the final stages of the Soviet occupation in 1988–89.

The *Mujahid* prided himself on exhibiting bravery in action and often demonstrated a careless disregard for his own life. He was highly motivated, functioned on very little food, moved great distances on foot without complaint, generally performed great acts of endurance over rough and mountainous terrain, and adopted a fatalistic attitude that rendered him the most formidable of fighting men. John Lee Anderson, who accompanied a unit of *Mujahideen*, noted:

> Just as they can be harsh when deciding the fate of other people's lives, they can also be stoic when it comes to their own. This stoicism comes out of their culture, in which war enjoys an exalted status, and from their faith in the Islamic idea that after death, a better life awaits. If they are to die, so be it, as long as they do well in battle in the eyes of God. They are *mujahideen*, holy warriors. They live to make holy war, to kill the enemy, and if necessary be martyred themselves. These are facts they accept. Most of them would have it no other way.[13]

In true guerrilla fashion, the *Mujahideen* possessed no heavy weapons in the form of aircraft or artillery. Nevertheless, they did employ heat-seeking, Soviet-made, Egyptian-supplied SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles, though with very poor results. However, because aircraft tried to fly at higher altitudes for protection, the rebels acquired, at the end of 1986, American-made Stingers—rocket launchers used in a ground-to-air target role as well as Blowpipe missiles. They also possessed recoilless mountain guns, mortars, and heavy machine guns, the last known as DShKs (Degterev-Shpagin). Some of their weapons were Second World War Soviet weapons passed to the Chinese and thence found their way to Afghanistan.

They deployed anti-transport mines such as the 15lb Italian-made TS-6.1, as well anti-personnel mines, some of which that popped up and exploded and others activated by the vibrations of footsteps or by radio or those set off by mine-detectors. The *Mujahideen* discovered them to be

even more effective by planting bombs underneath the mines to increase the strength of the explosion. These were pervasive and sometimes severely impeded the Soviets' movement. As Tamarov explained: "Without minesweepers along, no group ever went into the mountains, no car ever drove off the base, and no transport column ever set out along the road. There were mines everywhere: along the roads, on mountain paths, in abandoned houses."

IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF THE WAR

Space precludes an examination of the deep roots of the conflict and the history of Afghan-Russian relations, but extensive literature exists on the subject.[14] In seeking an understanding of the short-term origins of the Soviet-Afghan War, one must look back 20 months from the point of Soviet intervention when, on April 27–28, 1978, a coup staged by a group of Soviet-trained, largely communist army and air force officers overthrew President Daoud, who had himself come to power by deposing the king, his cousin, in 1973. The king, Zaher Shah, had gone into exile in Italy, while Daoud, who had been prime minister from 1953 to 1963, cultivated close relations with the Soviet Union and introduced communists into the government. Soon after taking power, however, Daoud began to change his policies, removed communists from his government, and purged leftists from the military. When Daoud's interior minister, Mir Akbar Khyber, was murdered on April 17, 1978, a large pro-communist demonstration occurred in Kabul, prompting Daoud to order the arrest of communist leaders, including Nur Mohammed Taraki, the founder of the party, who was detained on April 26. The coup began the following day, led in particular by Abdul Qadir, Aslam Watanjar, Sayid Muhammad Gulabzoi, and Muhammad Rafi. Rafi and Qadir belonged to the *Parcham* faction of the Afghan Communist Party, while Gulabzoi and Watanjar came from the *Khalqi* wing. Armor under Watanjar's orders approached the presidential palace (known as the *Arg*) with support from MiG-21 fighters and Su-7 fighter-bombers flown from Bagram air base north of Kabul. The palace guards put up fierce resistance in room-to-room fighting until, at about 4 or 5 a.m. on the 28th, the troops reached Daoud and his entire family, whom they murdered. The coup leaders instigated widespread arrests, especially amongst the middle class of Kabul—activists, nationalists, and intellectuals—as well as two former prime ministers. No serious evidence supports the theory that the Soviets inspired the coup and while KGB officers in the Soviet Embassy appear to have known of the intended coup beforehand they were unenthusiastic about it. Rather, it appears to have been the workings of Afghan communists

themselves, though clearly it enjoyed Moscow's blessings, for Soviet advisors in the country immediately offered assistance to the new regime.

The coup leaders soon included key civilian political figures from the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan), with Taraki appointed president and prime minister, Hafizullah Amin as foreign minister, Qadir as defence minister, and Babrak Karmal as deputy prime minister. In so doing, the regime mixed *Parcham* and *Khalqi* activists, a risky decision that developed into a potentially explosive relationship, owing to the fierce antagonisms existing between the two groups. Indeed, within a few months those antagonisms began openly to emerge. In a meeting on June 18, 1978, which included Taraki, Karmal, and others, an argument broke out, which resulted in the president ordering Karmal out of the room, and in an effort to shunt him off to marginalize his influence, Taraki posted Karmal as Afghan Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, along with several of his *Parcham* associates. Other *Parchamis* found themselves sent abroad to fill diplomatic posts and sensibly refused to return home when the Taraki regime redoubled its purge of the *Parcham* faction, including even members of the coup like Qadir and Rafi, who probably owed their narrow brush with execution to their Soviet connections. But many thousands of others enjoyed no such protection and found themselves in the hands of the secret police, or AGSA (Department for Safeguarding the Interests of Afghanistan), who imprisoned, tortured, and executed thousands in a campaign of terror meant to intimidate real or potential opponents and consolidate loyalty around the new regime, now dominated by *Khalqis*.

Accordingly, the infamous Pul-e Charkhi prison in Kabul became notorious for mass killings without a semblance of legal proceedings. The PDPA possessed no real ability to rule the country, for owing to political turmoil and repression, it neither controlled nor established and experienced state bureaucracy nor enjoyed widespread support for its ideas and ambitious plans for restructuring the country along Marxist lines. While employing coercion to instil fear proved effective in protecting the regime, its failure to govern once it had secured its power base caused considerable uneasiness in Moscow. The *Khalqi* movement instituted radical reforms via decree, with wide-ranging land reforms and alterations to women's rights to such an extent as to horrify conservative rural sensibilities, in turn encouraging resistance on religious grounds. Gennady Bocharov, a Soviet journalist, eloquently described the disastrous effect caused by functionaries who obtusely believed they could apply Marxist philosophy in the context of a society living almost as it had 500 years before:

> The revolutionary government reached a revolutionary decision: to give the landowners' property to the peasants.

To the peasants, the revolutionary government was as remote and incomprehensible as a government on another planet. The peasant acknowledges only one authority: the mullah. And mullahs have been saying for hundreds of years that the land belongs to the master. If you take so much as a handful of the harvest without permission, then Allah's wrath is inescapable. And now this incomprehensible, distant government is saying—take all the land, not just a handful of grain.

The result was that the land lay untilled. Unseeded. Land without hands to tend it. Land running wild. . .

The revolutionary government decided to introduce co-education in all the schools.

Fathers killed daughters who stepped into a room with boys. Young wives who found themselves in classrooms with strange young men had their throats cut by enraged husbands.

The authorities in Kabul tried to introduce a communist *subbotnik*, or day of voluntary, unpaid labour, on a Friday, the most important day of the week for Muslim prayer. Attendance at the mosques plummeted, resulting in riots.[15]

Even the gradual introduction of such reforms risked an unpopular reception; but the government's rapid approach guaranteed a hostile response to a regime whose representatives, unknown to the peasantry yet emanating out into the countryside to espouse and implement such radical ideologies, often did so at great personal risk. In turn, the regime set upon recalcitrant villages with pathological heavy-handedness.

Thus, if the new government enjoyed at least some support amongst the military, it possessed precious little from amongst the population as a whole, most of which consisted of small-holding peasant farmers, on behalf of whom the coup leaders instigated the revolution. By painful irony, the peasants in particular—but some workers, too—rejected the call to Marxism, which instead fomented armed resistance across the country, encouraged by the poor combat readiness of the Afghan Army, reeling from a wave of bloody officer purges, which, together with large-scale desertions, reduced the officer corps to half its normal size. Some personnel from the lower ranks also abandoned their units, either returning home or joining the resistance, taking their arms and skills with them. On March 15, 1979, owing to brutality committed by *Khalqi* activists, a mass revolt erupted in the western city of Herat where most of the 17th Infantry Division joined the rebel cause, slaughtering untold numbers of government officials as well as some Soviet advisors—which numbered about 550 across the country by this time—and their families. Units loyal to the government moved against the city and eventually occupied it while the air force bombed the city and the 17th Division. A staggering 5,000 civilians are believed to have died in the onslaught. This extremely brutal approach by the regime determined many other soldiers to desert to the resistance, some as individuals but others as entire units and even

entire brigades, reducing army strength by the end of the year to fewer than half its official strength of 90,000 personnel.

The riots and massacre in Herat triggered an uprising across whole swathes of the country, with opposition preached by mosques and village elders who condemned Marxism as atheistic and anti-Muslim. Religious leaders declared a *Jihad* (Holy War) and as fighting spread across the country the disruption of government business and the harassment of army units and state officials by the *Mujahideen* rapidly amounted to an intractable problem. Indeed, over succeeding months, as the resistance movement gathered pace, there appeared some prospect of its actually overthrowing the regime, reversing the communist revolution and installing an Islamic government in Kabul. In light of the Islamic Revolution's recent ascent to power under the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran—immediately to the west of Afghanistan—the Soviets naturally wished to prevent this eventuality, not least because of its obvious threat to the key principle underpinning the Brezhnev doctrine: that once communism achieved a foothold in government, the process was irreversible. To the USSR, any instance of a Marxist "roll-back" anywhere in the world was anathema on grounds of the potential precedent it set for Eastern Europe, not to mention the Soviet republics themselves.

The Herat uprising caused a serious degree of alarm in Moscow, which began to pay closer attention to events in Afghanistan. If Taraki managed to maintain his grip on power the Soviet Union could rest fairly easily with a friendly satellite state on its southern borders—a state of affairs critically important in light of the USSR's Muslim republics situated there: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Unrest in Afghanistan, Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet leader, feared, could spread elsewhere in Central Asia, so threatening the territorial integrity of the USSR. On March 17, the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko, argued to the Politburo that Afghanistan must not fall from the Soviet orbit, while Aleksei Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers and later a successor to Gromyko in the foreign ministry, stated that the Afghan regime was dangerously enflaming internal opposition and actively attempting to conceal its wide-scale acts of repression from the Soviets. Taraki hysterically requested the intervention of Soviet troops to help maintain order in Afghanistan, but when Kosygin met with him in Moscow on March 20 to outline the Soviet position on Afghan internal affairs, he refused direct military aid: Soviet intervention would worsen matters by enflaming opposition to the regime and arousing international condemnation. The meeting suggests that the Soviets contemplated no long-term strategy to wage war in Afghanistan; it is therefore instructive now to examine how and why the Kremlin's *volte face* occurred between March and December 1979.[16]

Matters shifted radically in Afghan politics when in September Taraki and his prime minister, Hafizullah Amin, fell out, and the latter,

suspecting that Taraki and the Soviets were plotting to oust him, seized Taraki and had him executed on the 14th. This untimely development did not please the Soviets, and Brezhnev, in particular, who was affronted by his protégé's demise under Amin's orders. Significantly, the coup led to nothing less than a fundamental shift in the USSR's attitude toward, and foreign policy respecting, its southern neighbour, with the relationship between the two beginning to deteriorate so rapidly that the notion of a Soviet invasion began from this point to become a viable option for the Kremlin.

In the event, Amin's reign of terror—led by KhAD, the secret police[17]—proved worse than Taraki's, with the ruthless pursuit of thousands of genuine and perceived dissidents appearing the regime's only answer to the president's failure to stabilize the domestic situation. The Soviets, angered that this merely exacerbated Amin's internal woes, distanced themselves from his regime, leaving him with no hope of developing closer relations with other powers such as the United States, who looked particularly unfavorably at the regime when in February its security forces had botched a rescue attempt to recover the U.S. ambassador in Kabul from the hands of unidentified kidnappers. Besides, the U.S. presidency, under Jimmy Carter, found itself so diverted by events in Iran—where revolutionaries seized the entire American diplomatic corps from the Tehran embassy on November 4—as to pay little attention to Amin's predicament.

Thus, by the autumn of 1979, with the Afghan economy on a downward spiral, the regime rent by political infighting, the country racked by full-fledged civil war, and the *Mujahideen*'s increasingly effective opposition looking certain to end in Taraki's downfall, the Soviets felt compelled to act. In the months prior to the invasion, Soviet military and KGB advisors toured the country under various pretences to determine the best method of ensuring a rapid subjugation of the country with a minimum of interference from Afghan forces. But the actual decision to invade did not apparently come until December 12, during a meeting of the Politburo chaired by Gromyko and attended by Party General Secretary Brezhnev; Andropov, the KGB chairman; and the Defence Minister, Ustinov. The first deployments appear to have begun when the 105th Airborne Division, under Marshal Sergei Sokolov, shifted its troops from Termez in Uzbekistan to Bagram air base, north of Kabul, beginning on November 29, followed a fortnight later by a large armored unit. Late on the evening of December 24, further contingents from the 105th set down at the civilian airport in Kabul, while other units arrived at Bagram, the air base at Shindand near Herat, and at Kandahar, the last of the major airfields in the country. In addition, units of the 360th Motorized Infantry Division crossed the border near Termez *en route* to the Afghan capital. By launching the invasion around Christmas the Soviets hoped to lessen the likelihood of any concerted Western objection.

OPERATIONS

Although the Soviet-Afghan War may be divided into distinct phases—although several historians have established different criteria with which to bring some semblance of understanding to such a fluid conflict with no established fronts—it is vital to appreciate that the nature of insurgency defies strict adherence to convenient divisions artificially determined on the model of a conventional conflict, complete with set-piece battles marking out the war's parameters through distinct campaigns and battles—not least decisive actions indicating its changing course—which seldom if ever occur in asymmetric warfare. In short, it is in the very the nature of an insurgency—characterized by low- and medium-intensity fighting and the enormous disparity between the protagonists' capacities—that neither side stands capable of inflicting a decisive blow on its opponent via one, much less several, decisive encounters. As with all unconventional conflicts, the outcome of the Soviet-Afghan War would depend upon the cumulative effect of years of steadily applied power; that is, in an attritional contest the winner of which has ground down his opponent through unacceptable losses and a broken will.

Before examining the operational phases of the war,[18] a brief discussion of the basic nature of the fighting may be instructive. From the outset of the war fighting took place throughout Afghanistan, with the highest pitch reached in the east, a fact confirmed by the large proportion of refugees and internally displaced Afghans who fled the area over the course of the nine-year conflict. As this area adjoined the Pakistani border, across which the bulk of foreign aid would flow to the resistance over this period, the country's eastern provinces naturally became the focus of Soviet attention, with the establishment of a buffer or *cordon sanitaire* their principle objective. To that end, the normal course of fighting served well in encouraging—or in many cases forcing—civilians to abandon the region for the safety and refuge provided by nearby Pakistan. Only later did the Soviets institute a deliberate policy of depopulating vast stretches of territory in a bid to deny the *Mujahideen* the support of the local population in various forms including food, shelter, and basic intelligence. From the beginning of the war and indeed for most of its course, most of the operations conducted by the resistance remained consistent with their limited offensive capacity; that is, a series—albeit a series of seemingly relentless—of small-scale attacks conducted across most parts of country—the central region of the Hazarajat figuring as a notable exception—in the form of raids, hit-and-run attacks, and moderately sized strikes against Soviet and Afghan regime bases, reconnaissance parties, and small convoys. Bocharov described one such attack against a column of APCs:

He clambered out of a hole and opened up with a grenade launcher. The first shot ricocheted off Nikolai's APC and exploded a little way ahead. The next one hit the turret dead-on . . .

And there did seem to be a lot of spooks, all toting grenade launchers and submachine guns.

Another missile went under the front wheels and exploded below the first axle. A searing flame burst through from under Nikolai's seat. He felt his entire back to be on fire . . .

He rolled out onto the body of the vehicle—awful, awful—everything burning all around, no sign of any of the others, just the chatter of automatic fire. He fell to the ground just as two missiles turned the APC into a useless heap of metal.[19]

Two further APCs were hit, killing and wounding several soldiers. Then support arrived in the form of Mi-24 helicopters: "The choppers swooped over the line of foxholes . . . spitting out pinkish-blue streaks of fire and missiles. Mud, sand, and rocks fountained up, showered down on the trenches, and obscured the sky. The earth groaned with explosions and gave birth to dead men."[20]

The *Mujahideen* proved masters at launching such attacks from places of concealment, as Bocharov again recounts:

Attacks on Soviet armoured groups were usually carried out without any prior warning. The spooks would emerge out of camouflaged manholes and open fire. Then they would disappear into the depths of their "kirizes," a network of underground tunnels dug for irrigation purposes, but now serving as perfect bolt holes. Some of the tunnels were large enough to allow movement of vehicles as well as people. They stretched under fields, alongside roads, and underneath villages. Kirizes under villagers drove the Soviet soldiers mad. One minute you'd have concentrated fire coming from a village, but when you entered it, there wouldn't be a soul to be seen: everyone would have gone to ground in the *kirizes*, and the village would be deserted.[21]

Yet allusion to such examples is not to assert that the Soviet-Afghan War must only be seen in the light of elusive guerrilla attacks followed in their wake by the hammerblows of a superpower wielding numerically superior numbers and advanced technology, for the resistance did not always hold the initiative. Indeed, as early as March 1980 the Soviets launched their first major offensive with a sweep through the Kunar Valley, which left approximately a thousand *Mujahideen* and Afghan civilians dead, yet achieved little more than temporarily driving out to other valleys resistance fighters who, in the wake of imminent Soviet withdrawal, reassumed their initial positions. Indeed, this pattern strongly characterized the course of the war—overwhelming force applied to enable ground troops to establish temporary control of an area after inflicting perhaps sizeable—but seldom crushing and therefore meaningful—casualties on the enemy, with those troops only to be withdrawn with

little (and therefore vulnerable) or no presence left behind, and thus enabling those same opponents to reestablish their former presence over territory that Soviet and/or regime forces must clear again—a frustrating and costly affair that inevitably favored the insurgency.

Much of the fighting involved insurgent ambushes directed against patrols and convoys, for in the case of the former, the *Mujahideen* possessed better knowledge of the ground and often struck under cover of darkness, while in the case of the latter, they took full advantage of the limited routes available to Soviet and government forces, who found their freedom of movement, even over short distances, hampered by a shortage of roads, particularly paved ones. Regular troops—at least not large numbers of them—trained to confront opponents operating according to similar doctrine, tactics, and methods of supply and evacuation could not hope to proceed across hundreds of miles of trackless, often mountainous, ground without commensurate support in terms of air power, artillery, and supply. Thus, large formations necessarily depended upon the existing network of rudimentary roads—ironically, most of these constructed by fellow Soviets after the Second World War.

From the Soviet point of view, the war may be divided into four phases: the first involving invasion and consolidation from December 1979 to February 1981; the second, the Soviets' elusive pursuit of victory between March 1982 and April 1985; the third, during the period of fighting at its height from May 1985 to December 1986; and the fourth, the period of withdrawal, covering the period from November 1986 to February 1989. These will be examined in turn.

Phase One: December 1979–February 1980

The Soviet invasion amounted to a *coup de main* employing a strategy modelled on that used in their last cross-border intervention during a period of unrest—Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1968. Hostilities began in Kabul on December 27 when airborne and *Spetsnaz* forces seized the Salang Tunnel and key government and communications points in Kabul, where Colonel Grigorii Boiarinov, leading Special Forces, specifically sought out President Amin, who had recently relocated from the *Arg* to the Tajbeg Palace in the southern part of the capital. There the Soviet assault force surrounded and stormed the building, killing Amin and most of his family, but losing Boiarinov in the process. During the assault the city's telephone system shut down after a deliberately timed explosion, and on the evening of the 28th, the Soviets employed a powerful radio transmitter on their own soil to broadcast a recording of Babrak Karmal announcing Amin's overthrow and naming himself successor. As far as the Soviets were concerned, their seizure of key points across the country, together with the successful installation of Karmal in power,

ought to have signalled the practical end of their major military operations in Afghanistan.

Soviet strategy concentrated on a few key objectives. First, the army was to bring stability to the country by protecting the main thoroughfares, placing large garrisons in the major cities, and protecting air bases and points of logistical significance. Once ensconced in these positions, Soviet forces planned to relieve Afghan government forces of garrison duties and redirect their efforts against the resistance in rural areas, where the Soviets would provide support on a number of fronts: logistics, intelligence, air power, and artillery. This would enable the Soviet forces to take a secondary role in the fighting, thereby both minimising their contact with the Afghan population and keeping their casualties to an acceptable level. Finally, they planned to strengthen Afghan government forces to the extent that once resistance ceased the Soviets could withdraw their own troops and leave governance and security matters to the "puppet" regime left in their wake.

The fact that the occupying forces did not anticipate serious resistance may be discerned from their original rules of engagement, which specified that troops were only to return fire if attacked, or to rescue Soviet advisors in insurgent hands. By necessity, these rules rapidly came to be altered, owing to the rise in casualties from the very beginning. On February 21, 1980, approximately 300,000 people crowded the streets of Kabul shouting antigovernment and anti-Soviet slogans. The demonstrations continued into the following day and the crowds flowed into the main streets and squares and appeared before the *Arg*, where President Karmal made his residence. Thousands laid siege to government buildings, threw projectiles at the Soviet Embassy, and killed several Soviet citizens. After the rioters looted scores of shops, overturned and burned cars, and set ablaze a hotel, General Tukharinov, commander of the 40th Army, received orders to block the main approaches to Kabul and stop the demonstrations. This he achieved, but the rising in the capital marked the proper beginning of a resistance movement, now extending its remit to foreign forces acting on behalf of an illegitimate regime.

This left the 40th Army with the unenviable task of defeating the insurgency across the country—a task for which, owing to its original remit of the previous December, it was not properly equipped or trained. In the course of this first phase of the war, that is, the two months from the end of December 1979 to the end of February 1980, the 40th Army had already suffered 245 fatal casualties, largely attributable to regular attacks launched against columns of troops and supplies on the main roads from the Soviet Union. The response lay in the establishment of mutually supporting guard posts (*zastavas*) at regular intervals, which secured the main roads, principal cities, airports, bridges, power stations, and pipelines.

These posts observed the insurgents' movements, supported convoy escorts, and could call in air or artillery strikes as necessary. By the end of February 1980, 862 *zastavas* dotted the landscape, scattered across Afghanistan, containing garrisons amounting in total to more than 20,000 troops—a fifth of the 40th Army's manpower—and as such committing troops to a necessary yet *static* function when the Soviets required substantial numbers actually to pursue and engage the insurgents; that is, maintaining the initiative or at least denying it to the enemy. In short, insurgencies are not broken by sitting on one's thumbs. General Valentin Varennikov described one *zastava*, situated on apex of a mountain near Kabul, thus:

> The territory of the *zastava* was shaped like an irregular rectangle. On three sides it was surrounded by a solid wall of sandbags brought in by helicopter. There was no fourth wall, because it was here the helicopter would touch down with one "foot" on the land. There were two heavy DShK machine guns at either end of this square, which was about six square metres in area. Steps led down to a little square below. Here there was a 120 mm mortar, with a mountain of shells piled up beside it, and a shelter from the weather.
>
> From the little square, a path ran downwards at about 45 [degrees], a set of steps hacked out of the granite rock, on both sides of which was stretched a stout rope instead of banisters. At the bottom there was another little square, about the same size as the one above. Here there was another heavy machine gun and this was where the tiny garrison—12 men in all—had their living; a place to relax, a kitchen, somewhere to wash and so on, the furniture—chairs, tables, sleeping places—all made out of ammunition boxes.[22]

Phase Two: March 1980–April 1985

During this period both the 40th Army and the *Mujahideen* modified their tactics in light of the painful lessons already drawn from the first two months of conflict. No longer would the resistance take on the Soviets in direct confrontations; instead, they turned to guerrilla tactics, with frequent, often small-scale hit-and-run attacks against outposts, convoys, and small units, always seeking to employ the advantage of surprise, particularly in the context of an ambush. The insurgents also planted booby traps and mines along frequently travelled patrol and convoy routes, as well as in abandoned villages. But the Soviets could sometimes play the game, too, laying ambushes along their opponents' supply routes, as Bocharov witnessed:

> They lay facing the track, a gentle slope at their backs. The squad had been split up into two groups. The track wound from afar, and was the only possible route for the caravan to take . . .

A spray of bullets punctured the camels' bellies and brought them to the ground, clumsily, onto their fore-legs, roaring with pain. One camel flipped over completely and skidded along the sand on its hump and the boxes strapped to it. The spooks, robbed of cover, sprinted in different directions. One escaped, but they got the other one. Bullets raked through his pelvis just as he got to the lip of the ravine.[23]

The *Mujahideen* also became increasingly ingenious in their methods of laying mines, as Bocharov recalled respecting an APC moving between Bagram and Kabul:

They bypassed the combined anti-tank and anti-personnel minefields, and negotiated the most dangerous spot . . . without incident. Two stray rocket missiles whistled by harmlessly. On one of the sharp turns, the telescopic antenna that cut through the air above the APC slashed a branch of an overhanging tree. A deafening explosion echoed around the valley, sending stabs of pain through the soldiers' eardrums. Despite its weight of many tons, the APC was flung forward like an empty tub. . . .

There had been a mine fixed to the tree branch, and the antenna had hit it, setting it off. The mine had been put there with APC radio antennas in mind: they were long and flexible, striking branches and rocky overhangs on the mountain roads.[24]

But the resistance did not rely exclusively on the remote actions of their explosive devices, however numerous and cleverly planted or laid, for they supplemented these measures with audacious attacks, as when in the summer of 1980 they bombarded with rockets the 40th Army's headquarters only four miles from Kabul. The Soviets did not remain idle, striking at resistance positions often located from the air and launching the first of many large-scale operations—notably the full-scale sweeps of the Kunar and Panjshir Valleys between February and April 1980—the last of which marked the largest single Soviet operation since 1945. This dislodged insurgents from a wide area, but only temporarily, while smaller units left themselves vulnerable to *Mujahideen* attacks of their own, such as in August when the Reconnaissance Battalion of the 201st Motor Rifle Division fell into an ambush at Kisham, near the frontier with Tajikistan, and lost 45 troops.

The Soviets struck again in the Panjshir Valley in September 1980, followed by other sweeps against guerrillas in November and from January to February 1981. This region, north of Kabul, held particular strategic significance, owing to its proximity to the road running north–south, which connected Kabul and Mazar-e Sharif through the Salang Tunnel and Pul-e Khumri. This represented the stronghold of Ahmad Shah Masoud, the best known *Mujahideen* leader to emerge during the war.

Soviet and DRA forces made substantial efforts—no less than nine in fact—to clear and hold the Panjshir but never succeeded. Other sizeable operations in 1981 included a largely Afghan Army operation, which in July succeeded in securing the Kabul–Jalalabad road near Sarobi; yet it is instructive to observe that regime forces suffered from low morale, performed poorly, and depended heavily on Soviet cooperation or shamelessly left the execution of major operations entirely to their patrons. This policy applied equally to the Soviets' fourth major offensive into the Panjshir, in August. This, like the others before it, failed, largely owing to paltry troop levels that rendered holding ground all but impossible for any substantial period. As before, the resistance troops simply reestablished themselves across ground from which the Soviets temporarily drove them by dint of superior firepower. Resistance casualties certainly mounted, but replacements were always to be found amongst those driven from villages destroyed from the air, living in squalid refugee camps over the border or preparing for *Jihad* in one of the thousands of *madrases* (Islamic religious schools) in Pakistan whence thousands of displaced Afghans joined the resistance with the promise of martyrdom the reward for the fallen.

In the west, around Herat, Soviet and regime forces engaged in heavy fighting with the *Mujahideen* in October 1981, with the air base at Shindand, south of Herat, the strong focus of resistance attention. Such actions proved that, despite inhospitable terrain and the great distances across which they conveyed supplies by mule, donkey, and horseback through the treacherous passes connecting Afghanistan with Pakistan, the *Mujahideen* could still undertake operations frequently and on a respectable scale—a circumstance partly rendered feasible by the large exodus of residents from Herat appalled by the regime's suppression of the rising of March 1979 and consequently drawn to the anti-Soviet cause. Further major encounters in and around Herat between the resistance and Soviet and Afghan forces took place in December 1981 and into January of the following year, with continuous, low-level fighting occurring thereafter.

The Afghan regime's ineptness came to the fore in April 1982 when *Mujahideen* penetrated Bagram air base and destroyed 23 Soviet and Afghan Air Force aircraft. The following month, another major Soviet-Afghan offensive into the Panjshir, followed by another—perhaps the largest of all the nine conducted in that area—in August and September, failed to make inroads against Masoud's strongholds despite the enormous scale of the operation. As a consequence of the stalemate reached there, the regime negotiated a cease-fire with Masoud, which held from December 1982 to April 1984 on what appeared mutually beneficial terms, enabling the Soviets to release thousands of their troops for potentially more successful operations elsewhere, while simultaneously providing

some relief to Masoud's exhausted forces, but particularly to the gravely stricken local population, whose humanitarian needs the insurgents could not in the midst of the Soviet offensive adequately meet, especially when compounded by the severe winter of 1982–83. Moreover, Masoud's forces had suffered heavily during the offensive and the cease-fire probably enabled him to recover and regroup before pursuing new operations further north, such as in the Shomali Valley, north of Kabul, where it is thought he struck, in conjunction with other commanders, at Soviet positions near Balkh.

In 1983 the Soviets altered their strategy fundamentally, embarking on a deliberate policy of clearing the Afghan population from rural areas and driving them either to seek refuge in the cities—where the Soviets or DRA forces exercized more or less total control—or to other, less strategically vital areas within the country, or over the border into Iran or Pakistan. At the same time, the Soviets continued to conduct major operations against areas where the resistance appeared in concentrated numbers—a painstaking, exhausting, and frequently fruitless undertaking. Often, owing to poor intelligence, they directed the focus of their attention in the wrong area of the country, as in the case of the north in the spring of 1983, where Abdul Qader (known more commonly by his *nom de guerre*, Zabiullah) led as many as 20,000 men and continued to conduct the sort of small-scale operations initiated by him three years before, including attacks, raids, and ambushes in and around Baghlan to the southeast, Balkh to the west, and Kunduz to the east. Amongst numerous *Mujahideen* successes during this phase in the war, the victory achieved in May in Mazar-e Sharif, the principal northern city of Afghanistan, figured prominently. Mazar, whose flat and treeless surroundings rendered guerrilla operations particularly difficult, nevertheless witnessed a bold *Mujahideen* attack that brought down the civilian airport's control tower.

As was common throughout the country, Zabiullah operated with other local, albeit less powerful, commanders who vied for control of their respective immediate areas—or indeed tried to lay claim to territory well beyond their normal areas of operation. Indeed, it is vital to appreciate that the *Mujahideen* did not operate as a unified fighting force with any more common objective beyond that of ousting the Soviets from Afghan soil and overthrowing the communist regime, whether headed by Taraki, Karmal, or Najibullah. Rivalry between different *Mujahideen* units, which could consist of a merely a dozen to several thousand fighters, sometimes led to open feuds over contested ground; indeed, observers did not rule out the fact that Zabiullah's death, caused by a mine in December 1984, may have constituted assassination rather than a simple vagary of war. Although commanders could agree on a common *foreign* enemy, they still retained an eye on Afghanistan's long-term political future and their place in it.

During the course of 1984, in line with their policy of depopulating regions presumed sympathetic to the *Mujahideen*, the Soviets conducted a wide-scale bombing campaign in the west, particularly around Herat, in so doing driving untold thousands across the border into Iran. In the Panjshir, with the cease-fire over in April, they opened yet another major offensive in that valley, which continued into May, with another following in September—again employing their new strategy of depopulation through a combination of intensive shell fire, regular bombing raids, and mine-laying. In August, the Soviets sought to relieve the siege of the garrison at Jaji in Paktia. There followed further efforts against the resistance in the east from January 1985 with the purpose of clearing areas in order to create bases along the Pakistani border, both to interdict the movement of supplies into Afghanistan and to weaken the flow of resistance fighters seeking a temporary safe haven in the tribal areas of western Pakistan or in that country's province of Baluchistan further to the south. During this second phase, which ended in April 1985, the Soviets suffered 9,175 fatal casualties—an average of 148 per month.

Phase Three: May 1985–December 1986

During this period Gorbachev opened negotiations in an effort to withdraw Soviet forces while simultaneously attempting to reduce the level of casualties during a period when discontent with the war steadily grew. Soviet troops sought increasingly to pass responsibility for making hostile contact with the resistance to their Afghan regime allies, depending themselves more on air and artillery operations and employing motor-rifle units to support DRA forces both operationally and in terms of morale. As Soviet and Afghan government forces continued to struggle in the east of the country, in June 1985 the resistance struck Shindand air base in the west, destroying about 20 aircraft. Fighting in nearby Herat in July grew so intense as to oblige the governor to leave the city, while at the same time the Soviets launched their ninth and last major offensive in the Panjshir Valley. The DRA regime also continued its efforts: in January 1986 its forces attacked Zendejan, inflicting heavy casualties on resistance elements but failing to consolidate its own tenuous control over the region. In the spring, anticipating a Soviet offensive against Zhawar, near the Pakistani border, the *Mujahideen* reinforced their base there, strengthening their anti-aircraft positions, and placing them about 5 miles outside their base, complete with defences in depth. They mined the approaches while small arms, RPGs, mortars, and recoilless rifles covered the area. Communications in the form of field telephones and radios kept the various outposts in contact with one another. The Soviets, in turn, provided one regiment of air assault troops together with 12,000 troops from the Afghan Army. Only 800 *Mujahideen* defended the base at Zhawar, but they

received advanced warning of the attack by the presence of two waves of helicopters, which approached ahead the main assault. Air strikes and an artillery bombardment followed, though the attackers could not be certain of the insurgents' positions.

At 7 a.m. heliborne troops touched down at scattered landing zones near Zhawar. The defenders shot down two helicopters in the process, but Soviet fixed-wing air support hampered further *Mujahideen* success and destroyed several of their positions, including 18 men killed. Their commander, Serajuddin Haqqani, and 150 of his men were trapped by debris blocking the cave in which they lay in wait, but by a quirk of fate the carpet bombing that followed cleared the entrance and facilitated their escape. With no answer to the air strikes, the defenders opted to move on to the offensive, thereby remaining close enough to the attackers to avoid fire from the aircraft. Haqqani managed to overrun four landing zones, taking several hundred prisoners in the process—a circumstance that led the Soviets later to alter their tactics to avoid setting down helicopters in the midst of resistance positions, which could shower descending aircraft with RPG and machine gun fire. But the *Mujahideen* could do no more: Soviet and Afghan forces managed to outflank Haqqani's position, forcing his men to fall back, and as reinforcements continued to appear around Zhawar, the resistance declined to maintain what amounted to an impossible defence and scattered.

DRA troops held Zhawar for a few hours but unaccountably neglected either to carry off the arms and ammunition that remained for the taking or even to destroy them. Likewise, they made a feeble attempt to destroy the caves with explosives, while their opponents, refusing to withdraw without registering a final act of defiance, fired rockets at regime forces as if to signify the hollow victory that Zhawar represented for Kabul. Indeed, within a few weeks the base returned to operational status, garrisoned once again by resistance fighters, whose losses in the defence of Zhawar amounted to 281 killed and 363 wounded, with government forces suffering similar losses. As commonly practiced—though of course utterly forbidden by International Law, the *Mujahideen* executed all of the officers they captured and compelled the soldiers to submit to two years' manual labour in rear logistical areas, with the promise of release after serving their time. Zhawar demonstrated that the resistance could not, in fixed positions, hold out against the concentrated firepower of Soviet and DRA forces. Nevertheless, in turn, although outwardly successful, their opponents could not muster the numbers to hold positions seized in the operation.

The capture of the major resistance base at Zhawar signified a welcome development for regime forces in an otherwise frustrating campaign against opponents who proved exceedingly difficult to pin into position and seldom entered an engagement except where the ground, weather,

numbers, or other factors played to their advantage. But successes such as Zhawar failed to conceal the fact that Soviet and DRA forces could rarely exert more than a temporary impact over a limited area before insufficient numbers and military priorities elsewhere obliged their withdrawal back to their bases of operation. Thus, taking ground posed comparatively few problems for conventional forces enjoying vastly superior firepower; holding that ground, on the other hand, required a far greater commitment in manpower than the Soviets were prepared to commit. Withdrawal inevitably left in its wake a vacuum, which the *Mujahideen* quickly filled.

In the south, the regime largely controlled Kandahar, but it could never hold down the region permanently against resistance units under such talented commanders as Haji Abdul Latif or the numerous other smaller rebel factions formed and held together by tribal loyalties or clustered around a particularly charismatic leader. If fighting in southern Afghanistan, particularly in and around Kandahar, tended to manifest itself in skirmishing in contrast to the large-scale operations conducted in the east by Soviet forces, it nonetheless occupied the attention and energy of regime forces for years. The absence of set-piece battles, coordinated campaigns, and great sweeps may belie a sense of tranquillity; but nothing could be further from the case. Low-intensity warfare by definition does not yield heavy casualties in the short term: there is no Somme, El Alamein, or Stalingrad; but gradual, mounting losses inflicted by the *Mujahideen* slowly ground down Soviet morale, encouraging the cycle of atrocity and counter-atrocity so characteristic of irregular warfare. Indeed, both sides committed barbarities against each other until they became commonplace. The Soviets sometimes cold-bloodedly dispatched prisoners by dropping them from helicopters after interrogation or simply shot them in the head, and both the Soviets and the DRA regime committed numerous massacres amounting to genocide.[25] The resistance, for its part, sometimes tortured its captives by means of castration, disfigurement, or skinning alive. Death could come slowly by securing the prisoner to pegs planted in the ground, fixed there to die slowly under a baking sun, or could come quickly via beheading.

Vladislav Tamarov, a young Soviet conscript, observed one of the common instances of atrocity committed by both sides:

> I saw houses burned by the Mujahadeen, as well as disfigured bodies of prisoners they'd taken. But I saw other things too: villages destroyed by our shelling and bodies of women, killed by mistake. When you shoot at every rustling in the bushes, there's no time to think about who's there. But for an Afghan, it didn't matter if his wife had been killed intentionally or accidentally. He went into the mountains to seek revenge.[26]

Often the combatants simply refused to offer quarter, as Tamarov recalled in the case of one *Mujahid* with his arms above his head in token of surrender:

> According to the rules of war, I should have taken him prisoner. But there were no rules in this war. I had no choice—there were only three of us, and we didn't know how many of them were left. To this day, I remember the fear in his eyes; it was so strong, that it was hard for me to take aim. All I could do was close my eyes and pull the trigger.[27]

The Soviets, far from pursuing a "hearts and minds" campaign in order to encourage the population's sympathies with the government in Kabul, committed atrocities with shocking regularity against villages suspected of aiding the resistance or in retaliation for ambushes, but such ruthless, counterproductive acts at best forced them out—denying the *Mujahideen* the rural support so vital to their operations—or at worst drove the survivors into the hands of the guerrillas. Thousands joined local *Mujahideen* groups, while most fled across the Pakistani border to join the resistance at its base in Peshawar before returning—trained, armed, bitter, and vengeful. A young refugee Afghan boy of about eight graphically related an account of the Soviets arriving in his village:

> The *mujahideen* went back to the mountains. They [the Russians] came in our direction. We were all in bed. They broke down the door and came in. The door was smashed. We were all frightened and jumped up. My brother didn't get up but they forced him to stand up. They shot my father and my brother. They lifted me up and wounded me with their bayonets . . . I lay down and cried. I was sad because my father had been killed. My father was dead and was lying on the ground. They took us outside. I saw lots of people had been taken out of their houses into the alleyways and killed. We went to the bazaar. The shops, the shops had been burnt. People had been killed. Everywhere women had been killed, men had been killed, even boys . . . They didn't leave a single one alive.[28]

Appreciating at last that such counterproductive methods only galvanized the population's defiant stance and increasingly aware that their military prospects were in decline, in the summer of 1986 the Soviets eased their campaign of driving civilians out of rural areas in favor of seeking to secure their cooperation with, if not allegiance to, the regime in Kabul. This very belated policy yielded few dividends from a people marginalized by brutality, the forced conscription of their menfolk into the ranks of the DRA army, as well as by the presence of foreign troops supporting a deeply unpopular regime. Thus, war merely continued as before. On July 6, the resistance conducted a coordinated and successful attack against an enormous Soviet convoy near Maimana, while in

August the Soviets, supported by Afghan security forces, conducted substantial sweeps into the Logar Valley. On the 26th of the same month the *Mujahideen* set off massive explosions near Kabul when they fired 107 mm and 122 mm rockets into ammunition dumps at Kargha. Arriving to secure the area and the local town of Paghman, Afghan government forces met heavy opposition, which after fierce fighting left the area in ruins. At about the same time, intense fighting took place in Herat.

During this third phase of the war the Soviets made more use of Special Forces in the form of *Spetsnaz* and reconnaissance units, which sought to interdict weapons, ammunition and supplies destined for the *Mujahideen* via Pakistan, but the frequency of contact during this particularly bloody period of the conflict cost the Soviets 2,745 personnel killed, at an average of 137 a month. These elite units performed well, and their deployment in greater numbers demonstrated the Soviets' eventual recognition that such forces could fulfil the pressing operational need for highly mobile, highly trained, specialist troops conversant with the tactics of counterinsurgency. But the *Spetsnaz* and other elite forces never accounted for more than 15% of Soviet combat power and simply could not sustain the extremely punishing levels of continuous deployment imposed on them. Indeed, even as the number of Special Forces reached their height in Afghanistan, 15,000 other troops withdrew in the summer of 1986, in line with Gorbachev's decision to bring home all the Soviet troops by early 1989.

Phase Four: November 1986–February 1989

With the war clearly going badly and the Soviets now committed to withdrawing, they were keen to bolster the new president, Mohammed Najibullah, the brutish former head of the vicious KhAD, and particularly Najibullah's "Policy of National Reconciliation," a plan to reconcile the government with moderate political and religious leaders of noncommunist persuasion, while simultaneously strengthening the numbers and capacity of Afghan forces and security personnel in recognition of the somewhat disconcerting fact that the regime would soon depend largely upon its own wits and resources to defeat the insurgency after final Soviet withdrawal.

Soviet forces naturally continued to support the efforts of the Afghan Army, but by now commanders sought to preserve the lives of men soon to be dispatched home. Part of this process included increasing attacks by air, such as with heavy bomber strikes originating from the Soviet Union against *Mujahideen* positions around Faisabad, Jalalabad, and Kandahar, from which ground troops had already evacuated. The Soviets also unsuccessfully launched raids against insurgent rocket batteries, shelling Kabul on a regular basis and, as their last forces were withdrawing,

aircraft hitting the Panjshir Valley in an effort to keep Masoud's forces distracted from shifting their operations to the Afghan capital. But in this fourth, and final, phase the Soviets largely occupied themselves with completing their withdrawal, which they carried out in two stages: between May and August 1988 and between November 1988 and February 1989.

Apart from Soviet troops' withdrawals, this fourth phase of the war is notable for two other features: the introduction into resistance arsenals of the Stinger ground-to-air missile whose effectiveness, though often exaggerated, nevertheless inflicted a serious blow on Soviet air power; and the increasing frequency of raids conducted by the *Mujahideen* over the Soviet border.

With respect to the Stinger, Bocharov witnessed the weapon's effectiveness first-hand:

> Suddenly, the chopper shuddered, as though it had collided with something, pitched over to one side, and seemed to halt in midair. Then, describing an imperfect parabola, it seemed to head back for the ground. But it wasn't flying back—it was falling, falling like a stone. A [missile] had pierced its stabilizer, wrecked the metal, and set the fuselage on fire. The pilots made desperate efforts to pull out, but it was useless. The chopper, with its full load of wounded, roared toward the ground.[29]

Observers dispute the number of Soviet aircraft downed by the Stinger, but it may well have accounted for hundreds.

Although the *Mujahideen* inflicted only small degrees of damage in cross-border raids into the Soviet Union's Central Asian republics, they palpably established the fact that not only had the Soviets failed to bring the insurgency under control, but that the resistance could penetrate enemy territory almost at will, such as that conducted 12 miles north of the Amu Darya River when insurgents bombarded a factory with rockets in April 1987.

As before though, such small-scale operations functioned in tandem with much larger engagements, such as the renewed heavy fighting that took place in Herat on April 7, when encounters in the streets resulted in over 50 casualties inflicted against Soviet and Afghan Army personnel. The following month the Soviets launched an operation specifically intended to relieve the besieged garrison in Jaji in Paktia Province. Although a success, the *Mujahideen* struck back to ensure their opponents did not establish a permanent presence in the area, forcing them out in mid-June. The following month, on the 27th, particular trouble erupted in the south—never a tranquil place, even before the Soviet invasion: a *Mujahideen* missile brought down a plane containing senior Soviet and Afghan officers while attempting a landing at the airport in Kandahar. At about the same time, the small Soviet garrison at Bamiyan abandoned the city after holding off a *Mujahideen* attack, while the resistance stepped

up their campaign of terror in Kabul when on October 9 they planted a car bomb that killed 27 people—one of many urban terrorist attacks committed by the resistance in towns and cities across Afghanistan.

Further proof of the Soviets' inability to hold much more than the ground on which they stood took place after the successful relief of the besieged city of Khost, in which 18,000 troops, of whom 10,000 were Soviets, succeeded between November and December 1987 in reopening to convoys the road between Gardez and Khost. The Soviets eventually abandoned these positions at the end of January 1988—another striking example of their inability to secure even positions of significant strategic value while burdened by other pressing demands on troops and supplies. Shortly thereafter, as part of their policy of withdrawal, the Soviets left Kandahar.

With Soviets forces evacuating the south of the country, activity continued in other regions, where resistance fighters, emboldened by their opponents' withdrawal, struck in Kabul on April 27, 1988, exploding a truck bomb that killed six and wounded several times more during the tenth anniversary of the communist takeover. Bombs planted in vehicles formed but one form of the *Mujahideen*'s renewed attacks in Kabul; on May 9 they fired rockets into the city, killing at least 23 civilians, with many more similar attacks to follow over the coming months. Such acts of terror failed to weaken the regime's grip on the city, but they exposed in stark terms the futility of the authorities' efforts to protect the inhabitants from indiscriminate violence and thus to demonstrate a capacity to maintain security even within urban areas—much less within the seat of government itself. In short, by operating in and around Kabul seemingly at will, the *Mujahideen* sought to underline the inevitability of the regime's downfall.

Elsewhere, in May and June 1988, renewed fighting took place in Kandahar—a city no longer garrisoned by Soviet troops—between local resistance forces and government troops, but with no decisive results. Still, the Mujahideen succeeded on June 17 in seizing Qalat, the provincial capital of Zabul Province, a place of symbolic importance as the first such city to fall to the resistance. The victory proved short-lived, however; straddling the main road between Kabul and Kandahar, Qalat enjoyed a level of strategic significance, which the regime could not ignore lest its retention by the *Mujahideen* signal the general defection of other towns and cities across the country. As such, the Afghan Army took particular pains to retake the city four days later.

CONCLUSIONS

The operational record of the war reveals that the Soviets completely failed to accept that their doctrine and training ill-suited them for the type of war into which they plunged themselves. Fully capable of undertaking

operations on a grand scale and in a conventional context, apart from their Special Forces, Soviet troops were not armed, equipped, or trained for a platoon leaders' contest, which entailed locating and destroying small, elusive, local forces that only stood their ground and fought when terrain and circumstances favored them—and otherwise either struck quickly before rapidly melting away. There were no fixed positions, no established frontlines and no substantial bases of operation for the insurgents. Whereas the Soviets could perform extremely well at the operational level—complete with large-scale all-arms troop movements—these could not be easily adapted to circumstances on the ground, where the war was a tactical one in which Soviet tactics did not conform to the requirements of guerrilla warfare. Soviet equipment, weapons, and doctrine suited their forces well for a confrontation on a massive scale on the northern European plain, a context in which they were confident in employing massed artillery to obliterate NATO's defensive positions before driving through the gaps created to crush further resistance and pursue the remnants of shattered units.

Soviet tactics did not accord with their opponent's fighting methods. No benefit accrued to massing artillery to carry out a bombardment of an enemy who seldom concentrated in large numbers and who dispersed at will, reforming elsewhere for the next ambush or raid. Soviet conscripts and reservists could dismount from a personnel carrier and deploy rapidly for the purpose of laying down suppressive fire on an enemy unit or subunit of like composition, but the tactics and standard battle drills of the typical motorized rifle regiment failed to meet the needs of a highly mobile, fluid enemy who refused to fight on terms consistent with Soviet doctrine. Airborne, air assault, and *Spetsnaz* forces learned to adapt their tactics to meet the demands of a guerrilla war, and in this regard they achieved some success. But the level of innovation required to defeat such a wide-scale insurgency proved beyond the means of Soviet forces as a whole, and thus must be seen as one amongst many factors that doomed them to ultimate failure.

The Soviets laboured under the illusion that because the heavy application of military force had succeeded in the past, it was bound to succeed as before. Important precedents existed to support this view, including the numerous campaigns conducted against independence movements as long ago as the Russian Civil War and into the 1920s, when Bolshevik forces put down revolts in the Ukraine, Central Asia, the Transcaucasus, and even the Far East. Even *during* the Second World War—quite apart from the herculean efforts first to oust the Germans from home soil and then to drive on Berlin—Soviet forces quashed serious opposition from Ukrainian and Belorussian nationals, some of whom carried on the struggle after 1945. After all this—and when their forces easily put down the risings in East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia—Soviet forces

could be forgiven for thinking that their might stood invincible against all foes, conventional and unconventional alike.

Afghanistan revealed this fallacy, and even when they adapted to new circumstances, the Soviets failed to deploy sufficient numbers of forces to fulfil the mission. They could not possibly hope to defeat the insurgency when spread across such a vast area. The defence of bases, airfields, cities, and lines of communication alone committed the bulk of Soviet forces to static duties when circumstances demanded unremitting strike operations against the insurgents, thereby maintaining the initiative and obliging the resistance to look to their own survival in favor of attacks of their own. Soviet regiments, companies, and platoons routinely stood understrength, with regiments often down to single battalion strength and companies little more than oversized platoons. Much of this occurred despite the large biannual troop levies that certainly furnished the men—but whose numbers needlessly dwindled enormously due to poor field sanitation practices and inadequate diet, both of which contributed to the widespread dissemination of disease throughout the armed forces. A staggering one-quarter to one-third of a typical unit's strength was accounted for by amoebic dysentery, meningitis, typhus, hepatitis, and malaria, leaving actual field strength woefully low and so operationally compromised that commanders deemed it necessary to create composite units on an ad hoc basis.

In assessing the tactics and the fighting capacity of the 40th Army, one is struck by the generally poor performance of its regular units. As discussed earlier, they were trained to fight NATO forces in the plains of central Europe, with a strict adherence to orthodox formations and methods of attack. This obliged them to remain close to their armored vehicles as they advanced down valleys in which the *Mujahideen* took full advantage of the ground, much of it familiar to them. Performance improved amongst Soviet units as they examined their mistakes, but the problem of understrength units regularly dogged their efforts and little could be done to counter the continuous drain on their morale, caused by the anxiety imposed by the continuous threat of attack by guerrillas who sought out the Soviet's vulnerabilities by day—but especially by night—so wearing down morale and causing physical and mental exhaustion. The war required immense physical efforts to make contact with an elusive opponent, whereas many Soviet soldiers lacked the stamina to cross the great distances necessary to come to grips with their enemy, not least across inhospitable terrain. Their training and equipment proved inadequate, and security and intelligence, particularly at the tactical level, proved poor to the extent that even when attempting to surround groups of insurgents, Soviet troops often failed to close the ring, thus allowing the enemy to escape through gaps or otherwise fight their way out. Overly confident in its fighting capacity—an attitude perhaps reinforced by a reputation of

military invincibility earned as a consequence of the army's performance in the Second World War—and with no combat experience acquired since that time—the 40th Army found itself the victim of breathtaking hubris: ill-trained for the type of warfare in which it engaged and incapable of achieving the unrealistic aims set for it by Moscow, it launched into the fray regardless.

SOVIET WITHDRAWAL

Over time neither overwhelming military force nor the internal reforms undertaken by the Soviets and their Afghan protégés could hope to crush the insurgency. While some Afghans, particularly those in the cities and above all the educated classes, collaborated with the Soviets, the Afghan Army stood distinctively subordinate to its counterpart and in that role—and given its consistently poor operational record—morale necessarily suffered and declined. Neither Soviet nor Afghan leaders could offer a political solution to continued resistance, and with an impasse in the field stretching far longer than ever anticipated, stirrings in Moscow began to encourage withdrawal, not least because the *Mujahideen* demonstrated no inclination to negotiate under circumstances where compromise offered them nothing.[30]

Accordingly, beginning in 1985 Moscow began to appreciate that the war had become unwinnable. Chernenko and Andropov, both of whom succeeded Brezhnev as party secretary for brief periods (November 1982–February 1984 and February 1984–March 1985, respectively), suffered from ill-health during their entire periods in office, in the course of which they failed to exercise the energy and leadership required to keep the insurgency under control, much less destroy it. This obliged the Central Committee to appoint a younger man to finish the job. Coming to power on March 10, 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev inherited an intractable war, as the Chief of the General Staff explained:

> In the past seven years Soviet soldiers have had their boots on the ground in every square kilometre of the country. But as soon as they left, the enemy returned and restored everything the way it was before. We have lost this war. The majority of the Afghan people support the counter-revolution. We have lost the peasantry, who have got nothing from the revolution. 80% of the country is in the hands of the counterrevolution. And the position of the peasants there is better than it is on the territory controlled by the government.[31]

Gorbachev represented a fresh start in Soviet foreign policy as well as domestic politics; a leader whose policy of *glasnost* (openness) had from the beginning of his time in office already tolerated internal—and even public—criticism of the war, and who recognized the strategic failure

committed by his country. His desire to extricate troops from Afghanistan centered on three key motives: first and foremost, the failing prospects of the war rendered further operations pointless; second, withdrawal would provide a mechanism by which to improve the Soviet Union's relations with the West, particularly at a time when the issue nuclear disarmament remained high on both countries' agendas; and third, with domestic discontent partly assuaged by the troops' return and military expenditure reduced, he could concentrate on the economic and political reforms urgently needed within the USSR.

The origins of the decision to withdraw require brief examination. At a Politburo meeting of October 17, 1985, Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, claims that Gorbachev declared, "It's time to leave," to which the other members raised no objection. They fixed no date for final withdrawal, but the die had been cast. Debate continues about the degree to which this meeting represented the first concrete decision to bring an end to the war, but any doubts may be cast aside by the decisive results of the Politburo meeting held on November 13, 1986, in which Marshal Sergei Akhromeev made the devastatingly prescient and unchallengeable assertion that, "We have lost the battle for the Afghan people." Gorbachev proposed that the Soviet Union should withdraw its forces over a two-year period, with half removed in 1987 and the rest to leave the following year—a recommendation to which the other members gave their assent. Herein lay the idea in principle; now Gorbachev needed the mechanism by which to implement it.

To lay the groundwork for troop withdrawal, Soviet authorities sought to expand the Afghan Army so as to enable it to take a more active combat role, though this did not achieve the desired effect since DRA forces continued to perform unreliably against their compatriots in the resistance, leaving Soviet troops to continue to bear the greatest burden in combat. This compounded anxiety over the likelihood of a smooth transition of security affairs over to the Kabul regime, already looking grim in light of the regime's continuing failure to successfully implement its programme of reforms. Gennady Bocharov was probably not alone in expressing anxiety about the competence of the Soviet advisors serving in Kabul:

> As a rule of thumb, party advisers were Soviet city and regional party secretaries.
>
> They knew absolutely nothing about the east. Their conception of Afghanistan was hazy, to say the least. That is not to say that there were no real specialists on the east in Kabul . . . But the standard party advisers dealt with practical matters. They were not interested in consultations. As for those who were charged with devising strategy and tactics—they frankly ignored the opinions of any specialist. . .
>
> The trouble with the advisers was not just that they didn't know Afghanistan. They did not know something even more important: how to run things in their own backyard, let alone a foreign country.[32]

In short, it became clear that Moscow would eventually have to withdraw from Afghanistan in as honourable a fashion as possible and thus leave Najibullah to his own devices—albeit heavily subsidized by his sponsors with food, weapons, equipment and supplies.

The United Nations stood as the obvious intermediary between the belligerents upon whom Gorbachev depended to achieve this, with the Afghan government effectively representing Soviet interests and Pakistan acting on behalf of the *Mujahideen*, since Islamabad supported the resistance even if unofficially, while the United States by extension supported the resistance through Pakistan. As such, negotiations conducted by the United Nations, if successful, stood to benefit the interests of all the principal parties to the conflict, belligerents and nonbelligerents alike. Having said this, accords brokered by the United Nations necessarily set some limitations on its freedom of action in light of the Soviet Union's position as a permanent member of the Security Council. That fact had protected the aggressor in 1979 since the Soviet Union could veto the United Nation's original condemnation of its invasion. Now, nearly a decade later, for the sake of extricating them from an unwinnable war, the Soviets were happily prepared to regard the United Nations as a third party in the process of "conflict resolution" by offering its "Good Offices" and assisting with shuttle diplomacy. Specifically, the secretary general, by the authority of the United Nations, could engage in negotiations unilaterally, supported by the UN Secretariat and its personnel in support.

The Geneva Accords were signed on April 14, 1988, by which the Soviets agreed to remove their forces from Afghanistan. Other essential elements established for Afghanistan and Pakistan a policy of mutual noninterference and nonintervention with respect to sovereignty, economic stability, and territorial integrity. According to one section of Article II, neither side could train, equip, finance, or recruit mercenaries, whatever their origin, for the purpose of engaging in hostile activity in either party's territory, including the maintenance of bases for purposes of supporting outside forces. As such, the DRA was to be left to its own devices with respect to subduing its own domestic insurgency and could not accept foreign intervention—though this did not preclude money and weapons.

For the various parties concerned, this represented a reasonable outcome, notwithstanding the fact that no delegates directly represented the *Mujahideen*. Attempting to negotiate with such disparate groups as composed the resistance—represented by seven different political parties, all based in Pakistan—would probably have been futile as any accord would inevitably have required separate agreements with rival groups, a course almost certain to prolong the conflict and lead to fighting between factions within the *Mujahideen* competing for power in a post-communist Afghanistan. But while the settlement enabled the Soviets to claim that they

had finally accorded with international calls for their withdrawal, they obviously could not ensure a peaceful outcome between their surrogates in Kabul and the resistance. Thus, the Geneva Accords merely brought to a close one dimension of the Afghan civil war; if anything every prospect existed for that bitter struggle—which, it is important to recall, had begun in 1978, before the Soviet invasion—to continue in the wake of Soviet withdrawal.

That withdrawal signalled the international isolation of Najibullah's regime, formalized when diplomats from key Western nations closed their embassies in Kabul. West Germany began the process on January 21, 1989, followed on the 27th by France, Britain, Japan, and Italy. The United States withdrew its diplomatic staff three days later, only reopening its embassy in December 2001 when its troops retook Kabul from the Taliban in the wake of the 9/11 bombings. Meanwhile, the passing of Soviet troops back over the border went largely unchallenged by the resistance, though the Soviets themselves, anxious to prevent attacks on their troops as they withdrew, staged a campaign of terror, largely with concentrated artillery fire, against villages along their route toward the frontier so as to intimidate the *Mujahideen* into restraint. Thousands streamed away from their villages as vast Soviet columns trundled through the smoke of the devastation left in their wake. Finally, on February 15, General Gromov, commander of the 40th Army and the last Soviet soldier to leave the country, crossed the bridge at Termez and so putting an end to a tragic adventure fraught with human folly and misguided ambition.

In the immediate wake of the Soviet's departure, the *Mujahideen* largely ceased their operations, preserving and expanding their resources and manpower for the day when they would oppose other factions vying for sole control of government machinery in Kabul. Civil war was, in fact, encouraged by the fact that rival groups expected some influence over the war's outcome in compensation for the effort expended since its beginning. Indeed, internecine fighting was bound to continue until a sole victor emerged. Any power-sharing stood unlikely, for rival factions possessed no mechanism for building trust between rivals; no agreement existed to divide responsibility for the rebuilding of the country's devastated infrastructure, for control over the military and security forces, or for the distribution of political power, amongst many other issues. As a natural consequence of these and many other factors, the fighting continued for another three years. During this period the Soviets continued to fund Najibullah's government, leaving in its hands an enormous stockpile of weapons and ammunition, which enabled the president to maintain, albeit temporarily, his grip on power until 1992. In the postwithdrawal period the Soviet Union established the greatest airbridge since the Berlin Blockade of 1948, furnishing aid to the DRA estimated at a staggering $300 million a month, with one report indicating that weapons

alone delivered in the six months after February 1989 carried a value of $1.4 billion.

But matters continued to deteriorate for the Afghan regime, a fact underscored by the attempted coup staged by General Shah Nawaz Tenai in April 1990, after which Najibullah quite understandably took an increasingly dim view of the loyalty of his security forces, which declined in strength from as many as 400,000 (including army, paramilitary police, and KhAD) in 1989 to 160,000 in 1991. His subsequent actions betrayed a man narrowly clinging to power: his desperate appeals to rural leaders for stability and cooperation rejected, he turned to raising sizeable militias to achieve the objectives, which his unreliable regular forces could not. In Herat, a hotbed of resistance, government militia increased from about 14,000 in 1986 to 70,000 in 1991, largely through attractive offers of arms and money to *Mujahideen* leaders prepared to defect with their fighters to the government now that the Soviet threat had passed and Kabul could supply their needs. A fifth of former *Mujahideen* groups shifted to the government side and recast themselves as government militia, while a further 40 percent accepted offers of a cease-fire. The rest remained irreconcilable. Ironically, these new units proved to be the president's undoing, for they grew so large—170,000 in 1991, accounting for over 50 percent of government forces—as to become practically self-governing in their own areas of operation, and when, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow immediately ceased funding the DRA, the various militias refused to obey orders from Najibullah's now transparently tottering regime. In many cases these rogue forces established themselves as independent units under the more powerful militia commanders who fashioned themselves into warlords—some controlling extensive areas almost as fiefdoms, collecting taxes and administering their own laws—operating in an increasingly chaotic and unstable state. Less powerful militia groups mimicked this practice, either vying for control over smaller areas theoretically under government authority or over other militia groups—and in so doing inaugurated a new period of the existing civil war, which followed the fall of Najibullah's regime in April 1992, and which continued even after the Taliban seized Kabul in 1996—by which time the loss in human life may even have exceeded that of the period of Soviet occupation.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT

Impact of the War on the Soviet Union

Earlier chapters have revealed the Soviets' many military shortcomings in frank terms. It is now time to examine the impact of those shortcomings on the troops themselves and to assess the political impact of the war on the USSR.

Statistics connected with the Soviets' role in the war make for depressing reading. Total forces deployed over the whole course of the conflict amounted to approximately 642,000 personnel. Of these, approximately 545,000 served in the regular forces while another 90,000 came from armed KGB units. Perhaps 5,000 belonged to the MVD (Main Department of Internal Troops, i.e., internal security troops). Statistics for the dead and missing vary according to the source consulted, but range between 13,000 and 15,000 personnel. A total of 10,751 soldiers became invalids, many as amputees. Yet these already substantial figures must be seen in light of the 469,685 sick and wounded—or over 70 percent of the total force—discharged and repatriated. Statistics for those stricken with disease tell an even more revealing story: a staggering 415,932, of whom 115,308 men suffered from infectious hepatitis and 31,080 from typhoid fever. The sheer scale of this suffering reveals the dreadful state of hygiene prevalent within the Soviet forces and their appalling conditions in the field. The pressure on Soviet hospitals—particularly with respect to the long-term sick and the disabled—can only be reckoned to have been enormous, with correspondingly serious social implications for society as a whole—unquantifiable yet palpable. In sharp contrast to their fathers who had defended the motherland against the German menace during the Second World War, soldiers returning from Afghanistan received no hero's welcome but also often felt shunned by a public detached from, if not actually hostile to, the war. The loss in matériel and hardware also helps place in perspective the scale of the conflict and offers a sharp lesson to those who adhere to technology alone as some sort of magical recipe for success: 118 jets, 333 helicopters, 147 tanks, 1,314 APCs, 433 artillery pieces and mortars, 1,138 radio sets and CP vehicles, 510 engineering vehicles, and 11,369 trucks.[33]

There is no question that the Soviet war effort suffered from poor or virtually nonexistent political direction. The series of either ineffective political masters in Moscow or the regularity with which they sickened and died off during the 1980s contributed in no small way toward Soviet failure. General Secretary Brezhnev, not healthy at the time of the invasion, became incapacitated the following year and did not succumb to his illness until November 1982, leaving all decisions to committees rendering collective leadership. His successor, Yuri Andropov, lasted less than two years, and upon his death in February 1984, Konstantin Chernenko carried on for little more than a year until his own demise. During this whole period the war was allowed to carry on with little in the way of decision-making over substantial issues concerning the conduct of operations or the overall objective of the war. When, at last Mikhail Gorbachev took the helm and found that the war could not be brought to conclusion within a year—in fact Soviet casualties rose to record levels during that

period—he sought a means to withdraw in a dignified fashion—which as we have seen the United Nations provided.

Even before the troops returned the impact of the war at home had become palpable. The Soviet military experience in Afghanistan amounted to a slow, attritional effort, which not only demonstrated the declining combat effectiveness of the USSR's armed forces, but also revealed stark, irreparable cracks developing within the Soviet political infrastructure. Society itself underwent change, owing to the rotation of conscripted troops in and out of Afghanistan, whose disappointments, stories of hardship, and frustration permeated Soviet society, undermining morale and sowing the seeds of doubt regarding both the war effort and the people's confidence in the political and economic system as a whole. Thus, problems experienced in Afghanistan manifested themselves back home—or one could contend that internal disintegration reflected back on Soviet troops' morale in theater. The two, in any event, proved mutually destructive, albeit within a process that must be seen as gradual—rather like that of the growing body count of the war.

While only a small percentage of the population served in the war or were touched by it as a consequence of the loss of son, brother, or husband, the Soviet experience in Afghanistan created a large body of disaffected veterans of the conflict known as the *afgansty*, whose disillusionment at home manifested itself over a range of emotions from unexpressed derision of Moscow to outright criticism of the Soviet system in general. Such veterans did not organize themselves into any form of political movement or lobby, but in light of Gorbachev's growing liberalization of Soviet society as a consequence of his policies of glasnost and perestroika, the attitudes of Afghan veterans nevertheless played some part in influencing public opinion and contributing to the general atmosphere of disgruntled citizens now prepared to question decisions made at all levels of government, including the Kremlin. In short, the war became a metaphor for systemic problems within Soviet society, and thus accelerated the rate of social and political change under way since Gorbachev came to power at the end of 1985. The cost of the war almost exacerbated such problems, for the cost of the war ran into the billions and placed an enormous strain on the Soviet economy, a burden that continued with the flow of supplies to the DRA after the troops returned home.

Criticism of communist rule, or at least the existing form, also developed from within, for the war led to a loss of faith in the party leadership amongst the middle and upper echelons of the Communist Party itself. Whereas before and during the Brezhnev era the party elite tended to operate on the basis of intraparty consultation, this practice had rapidly declined during the years of intervention in Afghanistan, prompting those of a reformist disposition to use the failing military effort as a means

to push through their agendas and thus speed the process of change. Many analysts point to the declining Soviet economy, the inability of the state to continue to bear the burden of subsidizing communist allies around the world, and the impossibility of trying to match the United States in the nuclear arms race as the prime movers in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the end the Soviets had intervened on the basis of supporting a notionally communist state; in reality, from 1978 the succession of Afghan regimes only attracted widespread domestic condemnation followed by open hostility and civil war. The fact of Soviet withdrawal in 1989, with little to show for it but a deeply unpopular satellite state condemned to hold down an insurgency, which even the Soviets had failed to contain much less defeat, went far in eroding at best, and delegitimizing at worst, the long-held Soviet doctrine that socialism represented a positive and *irreversible* movement for the political, social, and economic good of peoples across the globe.

Impact of the War on Afghanistan

Studies vary on unnatural, war-related Afghan deaths during the Soviet occupation, but range from between 900,000 to 1.3 million people. The scale of fatalities must not obscure the suffering caused to civilians injured and disabled. An estimated 1.5 Afghan civilians suffered physical disability as a result of the war, with the psychological trauma caused in the 1980s unquantifiable and virtually untreatable in a country with virtually no facilities or personnel capable of treating the affected not to mention a culture that does not properly recognize depression and stigmatizes those who fail to conceal the trauma associated with that condition.[34] The Soviets sowed and left behind millions of mines that continue to kill and maim. On the basis of these bare facts the damage and suffering inflicted on Afghanistan exceeds than that meted out by the Germans on the Soviet Union between 1941 and 1945. This speaks volumes for the colossal scale of this tragedy.

Vast numbers of Afghans became displaced as a result of the war, with over 6 million refugees—a third of the prewar population—beyond Afghanistan's borders in Iran and Pakistan by the early 1990s. An estimated 2 million more became internally displaced refugees.[35] Most benefited from the extraordinary efforts of both the Pakistani and Iranian authorities in providing aid to this massive influx of people, but in the end, the mere absence of these refugees from their villages left large numbers of people without skills otherwise acquired and practised in farming and cottage industry activity. Quite apart from those already possessing some skills, young people found themselves denied the ability to learn a trade, engage in agriculture, or manage and herd livestock. But to external

refugees must be added those internally displaced. The population of Kabul grew enormously as rural dwellers flocked to the capital in search of protection from air attack in the countryside. Women and children suffered particularly badly, because while their menfolk were often away serving in government units or as resistance fighters, they were left to manage themselves, often in a refugee camp outside the country in light of the devastation caused by aerial mines and high explosives scattered over and around mud-brick homes and compounds whose simple structures offered no protection from such ordnance. Quite apart from the social isolation that thus arose, women suffered from the loss of the wages their husbands normally brought home to feed families in a society where the long-term absence or death of a father and or his sons could produce serious disruption to family life, financially as well as socially.

Apart from the damage inflicted on the population, the war saw severe disruption to the Afghan economy, largely through the physical efforts of bombing and artillery fire. The Soviets sought out targets representing important elements of the country's infrastructure, while the absence of regular maintenance left other elements useless after years of neglect, owing to lack of parts or the absence of trained personnel to maintain machinery. As discussed, mud-brick housing offered no protection to high explosives, whether delivered on the ground or in the air, with the result that by the early 1990s 60 percent of schools lacked a physical structure. The country already possessed little more than a rudimentary road system—apart from the massive ring road that the Americans had built long before the war. What remained deteriorated during the 1980s, in turn adversely affecting trade and thus the economy as a whole—quite apart from making refugees' journeys all the more arduous.

The war also severely disrupted agriculture—the mainstay of the country's economy—to the extent that while prior to the coup in 1978 Afghanistan was unquestionably classed as a poor country, it did not qualify as one suffering from hunger. Thereafter, that fortunate position ceased to apply, such that by 1987 agricultural output had sharply declined to only a third of 1978 figures as a result of the loss of land suitable for cultivation, a decline by a half of land once available for cultivation but now unusable, owing, for instance, the wide-scale deaths of draught oxen. The bombardment of hundreds of villages and wide areas of cultivated land in order to force the population off the land and into the cities—or in any event away from areas considered vital to the Soviets—accounts for much of this deliberately inflicted damage.

Afghanistan also suffered a severe decline in its balance of payments, owing to a sharp rise in imports and a contrasting fall in exports. The country's trade deficit rose in 1980 from $69 million—representing 9.8 percent of exports—to $649 million—that is, 276.2 percent of exports, ten years later. Foreign debt also rose, from $1.2 billion in 1980 to

$5.1 billion a decade on. Inflation soared, with an increase of 980 percent during the 1980s. All these statistics translated into the reality of a sharp decline in the standard of living, with progressively higher prices for imported goods as the Afghan currency fell in value, in turn causing families to struggle against impossible odds to feed themselves and their children amidst all the other consequences of the war.[36]

FINAL WORD

The Soviet-Afghan War demonstrated that the Soviets embarked on an adventure based on unattainable goals. It sought to uphold a manifestly weak and unpopular government and in so doing, especially after violating Afghan soil to do so, shattered any degree of legitimacy that the regime might have hoped to garner from the Afghan people. When Taraki's communist regime came to power in Kabul in 1978 it failed to recognize that the bulk of Afghan society, based as it was on tribal structures with nothing in common with Marxist ideology, did not desire fundamental change to their way of life—not least reforms foisted upon them from outside, which represented a direct threat to centuries of tradition and religious conviction. The threats posed by the Kabul regime and its PDPA apparatus, activists, functionaries, and KhAD agents spread across the country actively propelled Afghanistan into a civil war, with Soviet intervention as an aid in propping up illegitimacy, exponentially exacerbating an existing civil war to appalling levels of misery and physical devastation, splitting the country along even deeper factional lines than before and encouraging Islamic extremism to boot.

The British Army field manual, *Countering Insurgency*, concisely sums up Soviet errors:

> Soviet activity failed due to several key strategic factors:
>
> They failed to remove the extensive external support provided to the Mujahideen;
>
> Inability of the Soviets to exploit internal weaknesses among the insurgents;
>
> Absence of a stable government in Kabul commanding popular respect.
>
> The Soviets failed to adopt an effective counter-insurgency strategy:
>
> There was no integration of military and political objectives and tactics;
>
> The immediate exploitation of intelligence;
>
> They focused almost exclusively on search and destroy operations;
>
> They had no understanding of the local community;
>
> They failed to restrict the enemy supply lines and communications networks.
>
> Numerical superiority was lacking—an estimated Soviet and Afghan Government force of 400,000–500,000 was required.
>
> Endurance, will and moral commitment were lacking.[37]

The war also revealed, as had Vietnam for the Americans 20 years earlier, that victory remains elusive even for a superpower when it confronts an opponent driven by deep ideological or religious convictions and bolstered morally—but above all materially—by generous external allies. Like the Vietminh and Viet Cong in 1950s and 1960s, the *Mujahideen* proved themselves an exceedingly formidable force with which to reckon notwithstanding their initial acute deficiencies in weapons, ammunition, and supplies. But once adequately armed, equipped, and fed—and with limited access to safe havens providing training and rest—the motivation and drive of an exceptionally robust, utterly determined, ideological-driven foe employing tactics suited to the circumstances produces the most intractable of opponents: one with time on his side and a willingness to accept horrific losses—many times in excess of his adversary. Herein lay the ingredients of a superpower's military demise and the concomitant ruins of its political ambitions in the region.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1985); D. Borer, *Superpowers Defeated: Vietnam and Afghanistan Compared* (London: Routledge, 1999); H. Bradsher, *Afghan Communism and Soviet Intervention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Diego Cordovez and Selig Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Gregory Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002); Mark Galeotti, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Union's Last War* (London: Routledge, 2001); Riaz Khan, *Untying the Knot: Negotiating Soviet Withdrawal* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991); Sarah Mendelson, *Changing Course: Ideas, Politics, and the Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Tom Rogers, *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan: Analysis and Chronology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992); Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2004); Oleg Sarin and Lev Dvoretsky, *The Afghan Syndrome: The Soviet Union's Vietnam* (San Francisco, CA: Presidio Press, 1993).

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Afghanistan: The Soviets versus the Mujahideen during the 1980s (Barnsley, Yorkshire, UK: Pen & Sword Books, 2007).

3. Alex Alexiev, *Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1988); Svetlana Alexievich, *Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from a Forgotten War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992); Jon Lee Anderson, *Guerrilla: Journeys in the Insurgent World* (London: Abacus, 2006); Sandy Gall, *Afghanistan: Travels with the Mujahedeen* (London: New English Library, 1989); Jan Goodwin, *Caught in the Crossfire* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1987); Russian General Staff, *The Soviet-Afghan War: How a Superpower Fought and Lost*, Translated and edited by Lester Grau and Michael Gress (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002); Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester Grau, *Afghan Guerrilla Warfare: In the Words of the Mujahideen Fighters* (London: Compendium Publishing, 2001); Ellen Jones, *Red Army and Society: A Sociology of the Soviet Military* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985); Scott R. McMichael, *Stumbling Bear: Soviet Military Performance in Afghanistan* (London: Brassey's, 1991); W. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Carey Scholfield, *The Russian Elite: Inside Spetsnaz and the Airborne Forces* (London: Greenhill Books, 1993).

4. Tom Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its People and Politics* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002); Antonio Giustozzi, *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan, 1978–1992* (London: Hurst & Co., 2000); Ralph Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx and Mujahid* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998); Angelo Rasanaygam, *Afghanistan: A Modern History* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2005); S. Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: Perseus Books Group, 2009); For a general background of the war, see also, David Isby, *War in a Distant Country: Afghanistan—Invasion and Resistance* (London: Arms & Armour Press, 1989), 11–16. The coup of 1978 and the beginning of the anti-government rising are covered by T. Hammond, *Red Flag over Afghanistan: The Communist Coup, the Soviet Invasion and the Consequences* (Lanham, MD: Westview Press, 1984), 49–78.

5. Arnold, *Soviet Invasion in Perspective*; Henry Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983); Joseph Collins, *The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: A Study in the Use of Force* (Heath Canada, 1986); Feifer, *Great Gamble*; Edward Girardet, *Afghanistan: The Soviet War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985); M. Hassan Kakar, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979–1982* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). See, particularly, the Carter administration's response in Hammond, *Red Flag*, 105–129.

6. Alexiev, *Inside the Soviet Army*; Anderson, *Guerrilla*; Gennady Bocharov, *Russian Roulette: Afghanistan through Russian Eyes* (London: HarperCollins, 1990); Arthur Bonner, *Among the Afghans* (Durham, NC: Durham University Press, 1987); Collins, *Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan*; Gall, *Travels with the Mujahedeen*; Goodwin, *Caught in the Crossfire*; Lester Grau, *The Bear Went over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan* (London: Routledge, 1998); Jalali and Grau, *Afghan Guerrilla Warfare*; Robert Kaplan, *Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001); McMichael, *Stumbling Bear*; Odom, *Collapse of the Soviet Military*; Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*; Scholfield, *The Russian Elite*; Vladislav Tamarov, *Afghanistan: A Russian*

Soldier's Story (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2005). For the development of Afghan resistance, see William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 48–70.

7. Basic texts on the war include: Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan, 1979–89* (London: Profile Books, 2011); André Brigot and Olivier Roy, *The War in Afghanistan*: *An Account and Analysis of the Country, Its People, Soviet Intervention and Resistance* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988); Feifer, *Great Gamble*; Galeotti, *Afghanistan*; Girardet, *Soviet War*; David Isby, *Russia's War in Afghanistan* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1986); T. A. Wilson, *The Soviet-Afghan War* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas University Press, 2002).

8. These points are starkly shown by the case studies drawn up in Grau, *Bear Went over the Mountain*; McMichael, *Stumbling Bear*, 18–24, 38–44, 63–79, 97–129. Soviet strategy and tactics are well covered by Maley, *Afghanistan Wars*, 32–47; and Isby, *War in a Distant Country*, 49–60, with a discussion of weaponry on 62–76. For Afghan government forces, see Isby, *War in a Distant Country*, 61–62, 77–92. Soviet weapons and strategy are covered by Girardet, *Afghanistan*, 30–47. For an overview of tactics and military forces, see J. Bruce Amstutz, *Afghanistan: The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation* (Stockton, CA: University Press of the Pacific, 2002), 127–197.

9. McMichael, *Stumbling Bear*, 80–96

10. McMichael, *Stumbling Bear*, 45–51.

11. Tamarov, *Afghanistan*, 115.

12. Maley, *Afghanistan Wars*; McMichael, *Stumbling Bear*, 25–37; Isby, *War in a Distant Country*, 93–116.

13. Anderson, *Guerrilla*, 148–149.

14. Braithwaite, *Afgantsy*, 5–81; Kakar, *Afghanistan*, 1–31; For the Karmal period of Afghan politics, see Maley, *Afghanistan Wars*, 71–89; and for the Najibullah period, 71–89. For a discussion of the Andropov and Chernenko periods, see Cordovez and Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, 91–184; and for Gorbachev's years, 187–209. Historical relations between Russia and Afghanistan are covered by Amstutz, *Afghanistan*, 3–18, with growing Soviet involvement on 19–50, as does Hammond, *Red Flag*, 3–45.

15. Bocharov, *Russian Roulette*, 57.

16. Soviet plans and considerations are covered in Feifer, *Great Gamble*, 9–54; Kakar, *Afghanistan*, 32–50; Maley, *Afghanistan Wars*, 6–31; Cordovez and Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, 13–49; Amstutz, *Afghanistan*, 40–50; and Hammond, *Red Flag*, 79–94 and 130–147. Girardet, *Afghanistan*, 12–29; and Hammond, *Red Flag*, 97–104, cover the invasion.

17. See for instance, Kakar, *Afghanistan*, 153–168; for other means of internal repression, see 169–209. "Sovietization" and repression are well covered by Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 122–145, Cordovez and Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, 53–88, Hammond, *Red Flag*, 148–154 and Girardet, *Afghanistan*, 88–161. Guerrilla operations and other forms of resistance are covered by Girardet, *Afghanistan*, 48–87; for parties and propaganda, see 162–201. Amstutz, *Afghanistan*, 51–125, considers DPA government politics and resistance. Kakar, *Afghanistan*, 79–149; and Hammond, *Red Flag*, 155–172, are excellent on various forms of internal resistance. Amstutz, *Afghanistan*, discusses the secret police and human rights violations, 263–282; and Sovietization, 283–321.

18. Braithwaite, *Afgantsy*, 121–246; Feifer, *Great Gamble*, 55–217. See also, McMichael, *Stumbling Bear*, 1–17, 52–62; Rob Johnson, *The Afghan Way of War—Culture and Pragmatism: A Critical* History (London: Hurst & Co., 2011), 205–248. Isby, *War in a Distant Country*, 17–48, covers the operational history. External aid is discussed in Isby, *War in a Distant Country*, 117 and Amstutz, *Afghanistan*, 199–222.

19. Bocharov, *Russian Roulette*, 36–37.

20. Bocharov, *Russian Roulette*, 40–41.

21. Bocharov, *Russian Roulette*, 35–36.

22. Quoted in Braithwaite, *Afgantsy*, 141.

23. Bocharov, *Russian Roulette*, 24.

24. Bocharov, *Russian Roulette*, 32.

25. Kakar, *Afghanistan*, 213–251.

26. Tamarov, *Afghanistan*, 116.

27. Tamarov, *Afghanistan*, 126.

28. Sandy Gall, *Afghanistan: Agony of a Nation* (London: Bodley Head, 1988), 1.

29. Bocharov, *Russian Roulette*, 43.

30. For general treatments of the Soviet decision to withdraw and the diplomatic settlement, see Braithwaite, *Afgantsy*, 249–293; Feifer, *Great Gamble*, 218–254; Tom Rogers, *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan: Analysis and Chronology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992); Maley, *Afghanistan Wars*, 105–126; Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 146–183; Amstutz, *Afghanistan*, 323–369.

31. Quoted in Johnson, *Afghan Way of War*, 241; Cordovez and Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, 245–312, 365–387.

32. Bocharov, *Russian Roulette*, 61.

33. Braithwaite, *Afgantsy*, 329–331; Feifer, *Great Gamble*, 255–267; Grau, Bear *Went over the Mountain*, xiv; Isby, *War in a Distant Country*, 62. Maley, *Afghanistan Wars*, 127–139, is useful for the general consequences of the war and the aftermath for Najibullah, 140–161. For the civil war after 1992, see Maley, 162–274 and Johnson, *Afghan Way of War*, 249–298; Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 184–280.

34. Braithwaite, *Afgantsy*, 331.

35. For discussion of refugees and their relief, see Girardet, *Afghanistan*, 202–232; and Amstutz, *Afghanistan*, 223–231. Amstutz also discusses, 233–262, the impact of the war on the economy.

36. Maley, *Afghanistan Wars*, p. 130.

37. UK Ministry of Defence, *Army Field Manual, Volume 1: Part 10, Countering Insurgency* (London: MoD, 2010), Section 3–15.

CHAPTER 11

Counterinsurgency in Turkey: Confronting Kurdish Separatism and the PKK since 1984

Roger Chapman

The Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK, or Kurdistan Workers' Party), founded in 1978, is a Kurdish insurgency group that employs guerrilla and terrorist tactics in its cause for Kurdish separatism in southeastern Turkey. By one estimate, the PKK insurgency has been responsible for 35,000 fatalities, including a death toll of 4,800 civilians, 5,850 security personnel, and 25,000 insurgents. In addition, some 6,000 PKK fighters have been captured and imprisoned.[1] A more recent source maintains that from the first PKK attacks in 1984 and up to 2013, the Kurdish insurgency in Turkey has been responsible for the deaths of some 40,000 people.[2] The Turkish government's response to the PKK has been one that has evolved from a strictly military approach, involving deterrence and oppression, to a counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign coupled with cultural accommodation policies in the problem region. Although the PKK has been weakened following the dramatic capture and imprisonment of its founder Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, such decapitation did not bring the conflict to an end. According to one analyst, the Kurdish problem is "the most politically challenging and violent problem facing Turkish modernization."[3]

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The Kurds are roughly 30 to 35 million in number, spread over a half dozen countries, predominately in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Approximately three-fifths of the Kurds reside in the rural southeastern

part of Turkey (14 million people), though many of them have felt like second-class citizens in a country in which they constitute 20 percent of the total population. The Kurds do not think of themselves as Turks, but rather a special race that has descended from the ancient Medes. According to tradition, for centuries the Kurds maintained a separate cultural identity in the mountain strongholds of Anatolia, surviving the rise and fall of the Armenian, Greek, Byzantine, Safavid, Qajar, and Ottoman empires. In the course of events the Kurds developed a reputation as a rugged people and staunch defenders of their homeland. Although Kurds speak Indo-European languages related to Persian and Pashto and not Turk, Turkish authorities have often referred to Kurds as "mountain Turks" while refusing to recognize them as a distinctive non-Turkish ethnic minority. The fact is, the Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the world that does not have its own independent nation state.[4]

With the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, the general consensus of the victors was that the Kurds should be allowed a pathway for establishing a sovereign homeland. Articles 62–64 of Section III of the Treaty of Sèvres, signed on August 10, 1920, provided an allowance for a Kurdish state. Specifically, Article 62called for "a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia. . . ." And Article 64 stipulated that within a year the Kurdish people would have the opportunity to petition the League of Nations for nationhood status if "a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey. . . ."[5] The idea behind a Kurdish state was to create a buffer between Turkey and Soviet-controlled Azerbaijan as well as a buffer between Turkey and Iran. The theory was that a Kurdistan would weaken the power of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. While controlling Iraq, the British gave tacit support to Kurdish nationalism in that country for the simple reason of containing Turkey and Iran. However, the Treaty of Sèvres was not ratified and was superseded by the Treaty of Lausanne.[6]

The Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923, established permanent boundaries for the nation of Turkey and contained no reference to the Kurds. Eager to acquire Turkey as an ally to isolate Bolshevik Russia, the British agreed not to press the Kurdish cause.[7] The Kurdish region was divided by national boundaries, resulting in a fragmentation of the Kurdish people as they were subsumed by a half dozen states. As it was, in Turkey there were many Kurds uninterested in Kurdish self-determination.[8] At one time the new Turkish government considered granting its Kurdish provinces a form of autonomy, but suspicions lingered that the Allied powers still envisioned an independent Kurdish state. Northern Iraq was of concern and the Turks were convinced the British were purposely

stirring Kurdish unrest. Thus, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), the founder of the modern Turkish republic, banned Kurdish associations, schools, and publications. The following year, 1925, Sheik Said led a Kurdish rebellion of 3,000 to 5,000 men and at one point took control of about one-third of the Kurdish provinces in southeastern Turkey. That rebellion, largely a negative response to Kemal's secularization program, was brutally crushed and its leader hanged. During the 1930s other rebellions flared and were quelled, including a revolt in the village of Dersim (later renamed Tunceli). Atrocities carried out by government forces, including murder, were covered by a blanket pardon.[9]

On July 8, 1937, the Sadaabad Pact (or Treaty of Non-Aggression) was signed between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Comprised of ten main articles, four of which pertained to the Kurds, the treaty was viewed as an anticommunist alliance. Although the treaty focused on "external threats," part of the underlying concern was the potential danger of co-opted Kurds within the borders of three of the signatory nations.[10] Moreover, Kemal's ideology for Turkey emphasized "Turkification," meaning cultural homogeneity. The Kemal approach recognized no ethnic minority, which made Kurdish identity tantamount to treason. In other words, officially all citizens of Turkey were Turks and could only be Turks. From the 1930s to the 1980s the Kurdish regions were oppressed, as Ankara attempted forced assimilation. These efforts were interwoven with economic development in the Kurdish provinces, but tensions remained. Kurdish resistance was never completely eliminated, receiving support from Iran up until about 1975.[11] In the words of Kurdish historian Kendal Nezan, writing in 1979, "Repression has turned the Kurdish peasants into a race of outlaws."[12]

But any discussion about the Kurdish people in Turkey and the repression they suffered is complicated because there is no common Kurdish experience. As Murat Somer explains:

> Those Kurds who joined, or were suspected of having joined Kurdish rebellions, and many of their descendants, faced such treatment in the hands of the state that they developed a hardened sense of Kurdish difference and a highly skeptical image of Turks and the Turkish state. Other Kurds voluntarily associated with Turkish nationalism as an ideology of liberation and modernization. Others reluctantly assimilated into the mainstream Turkish society, to differing degrees for different individuals, in response to the state's assimilatory policies. Yet other Kurds developed their sense of ethnic difference as a result of their geographical, educational and economic mobility during the industrialization, urbanization, and politicization of Turkish society from the 1960s on. Finally, many more Kurds experienced ethnic differentiation as a result of the oppressive practices and human rights abuses of the 1980–1983 military rule, and the environment of physical and socio-economic insecurity created by the PKK insurgency and the state's counterinsurgency during the 1990s.[13]

FOUNDING OF THE PKK

The PKK emerged out of a student leftist group that formed in the mid-1970s in Ankara. Abdullah Öcalan (pronounced OH-jah-lahn), the leader, was born in 1950 and grew up in the ethnically mixed village of Urfa. His background was a mixture of Kurdish, Turkish, and Arabic ancestry. While attending Ankara University, where he studied political science, Öcalan came to identify with Marxist-Leninism. His followers began referring to themselves as Apocus, after Öcalan's nickname: Apo. This leader was Stalinist, with a cult personality, but in tactics he aimed for a Maoist-type insurgency that would rely on the rural villagers to achieve the revolution. In the first years of his radical career, Öcalan went after rival groups and dissidents within his own movement and by 1977 his band numbered between 250 and 300.[14]

The group was officially founded on November 28, 1978, with the stated aim "a destruction of colonialism" in all Kurdish territories (Turkey as well as Syria, Iraq, and Iran) and "the construction of a democratic and united Kurdistan, based on Marxist-Leninist principles."[15] The group's seriousness with Marxist principles was at times cast into doubt,[16] but its nationalism was never questioned. Following a government crackdown against the societal unrest, Öcalan fled to Syria in July 1979. The military coup of September 1980, led by Chief of Staff General Kenan Evren, resulted in mass arrests, among them more than a thousand suspected PKK supporters. Öcalan made his way to Lebanon where, from 1980 to 1982, he arranged for various Palestinian groups to provide guerrilla training to some 300 of his followers. Also during this time, the PKK began organizational work in Europe (first Germany and later in Holland, Sweden, and France), recruiting and raising funds in the communities of Kurdish refugees. In 1982, as the Iraq–Iran War (1980–88) continued, Öcalan took advantage of the void to strike a deal with the Iraqi Kurds, specifically the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), to set up PKK camps in northern Iraq from which to conduct cross-border raids into Turkey.[17] After the PKK formed its guerrilla force, known as the Arteshen Rizgariya Gelli Kurdistan (ARKG, or Kurdistan People's Liberation Army), a political wing was established, the Eniya Rizgariya Netewa Kurdistan (ERNK, or Kurdistan Popular Liberation Front).[18]

The PKK's first guerrilla offensive began in 1984 after some time was spent placing insurgents in the Kurdish provinces of the country, gathering intelligence, and bolstering the pro-PKK civilian militias. The aim was to attack army personnel stationed in the Kurdish provinces in order to demonstrate to Kurds that the PKK was capable and committed to an armed struggle. The ultimate strategy was that this would lead to local uprisings against the military occupation.

The country had recently returned to civilian rule and the state of emergency had been lifted, so the PKK resurgence caught Ankara officials by surprise. Under military rule political violence had been reduced by 90 percent and strict rules forbade political groups from championing or protecting non-Turkish culture.[19]

TURKEY'S RESPONSE: TOTAL WAR

In its response to the PKK, Turkish officials applied aggressive "'big stick' COIN," involving four different strategies that amounted to "total war." First, efforts were made to place a wedge between the insurgents and their supporting population. Second, Turkish forces pursued the insurgents into the mountains. Third, focus was placed on Iraq to cut off the PKK's cross-border support. Fourth, an important element of the country's foreign policy involved the PKK's decapitation through the capture of its leader Abdullah Öcalan, outside of Turkey.[20]

The PKK insurgency had the challenge of trying to unite a diverse Kurdish community consisting of 700 tribes and clans.[21] Villagers who were deeply religious were disenchanted with the secular state as much as they were with the Marxist-Leninist "liberators" who by ideology were antireligious. The PKK engaged in extortion and often targeted village elders and wealthy village chiefs who were seen as being oppressive of the lower classes. PKK strategy was to demonstrate to villagers that they could not be protected by the government. Also, rebels would engage in kidnappings to fill the ranks and to guarantee a source of food and shelter from the villages from which the recruits were drawn.[22]

Since "the PKK often treated Kurdish villagers as brutally as it did Turkish security forces," Ankara could have used the situation to its advantage. Instead, the government's response to the troubled region was martial and emergency laws that consequently "left the Kurdish populous with few options."[23] Between 1984 and 2002, seven Kurdish provinces (Diyarbakir, Elazig, Siirit, Sirnak, Tuncelli, Van, and Batman) were put under the control of a "super-governor," a lieutenant general in the Turkish military.[24] In April 1985, the government adopted the Provisional Village Guard System, which involved "volunteer" village guards (*korocular*) acting as security against the PKK. Over time some 40,000 to 95,000 would be coerced into *korocular* duty. In July 1987, the government imposed emergency rule on the Kurdish region, a situation that would not be totally lifted until 2002.[25] Police pressure and monitoring was an attempt to check Kurdish collaboration and sympathy with the PKK.[26] During the state of emergency some 300,000 troops were stationed in the 10 Kurdish provinces.[27]

In addition, the Turkish government sponsored rightwing death squads to target Kurdish nationalists.[28] The Turkish Human Rights Foundation estimated that 5,000 Kurds were killed between 1991 and 1995. Also, beginning in the 1990s the government forced many Kurds to "evacuate" to urban centers. This activity, which peaked in the mid-1990s, resulted in the destruction or evacuation of 1,779 villages and 6,153 settlements. Between 3 and 4 million Kurds were consequently displaced. This forced internal diaspora, observers have noted, is similar to the response to the Kurdish rebellions of the 1920s and 1930s when the government attempted assimilation by removing Kurds from "inaccessible areas" and thinly spreading them in the more reachable Turkish villages.[29] This tactic has been described as the "Kurdish Diaspora in the Turkish City."[30]

As the oppression campaign was occurring in the Kurdish region inside the country, Turkish forces carried out cross-border operations in Iraq. On May 26, 1983, Turkey launched an offensive 25 miles deep into northern Iraq, deploying 8,000–10,000 troops and capturing several hundred suspected PKK members. Other such operations followed in 1986 and 1987. As a consequence of the Gulf War (1990–91) a de facto Kurdish state was established in northern Iraq, which was a natural advantage to PKK operatives. In March 1995, Turkey launched Operation *Steel Curtain* by sending 35,000 security troops across the Iraqi border and into the Kurdish zone. The purpose of the offensive was to put a stop to the PKK cross-border raids and to crush the insurgency.[31]

Despite having the second largest standing army in NATO, that operation did not put an end to the PKK. By 1993 the PKK was boasting a guerrilla force of between 8,000 and 11,000.[32] On the other hand, there were signs of PKK weakening. In March 1993, Öcalan renounced the goal of a separate state and expressed a desire to negotiate with Turkish authorities. At the same time, the PKK began attacking Turkish targets in 29 cities across Europe "to show Europe that the Kurdish people are suffering."[33] The PKK's struggle with Ankara was compounded by the fact that many Kurds were not interested in establishing an independent homeland. A 1992 poll showed that only 22 percent of Kurdish respondents thought an independent state was the answer to the solution to the Kurdish question. Most Kurds expressed a desire for the government to exercise tolerance toward their ethnic culture. In the same poll 50 percent of the Kurdish respondents were against a Kurdish state.[34] Despite the pressure the PKK was feeling, Ankara's war against the insurgency and the corresponding oppression of the Kurdish populace was costing $10 billion per year.[35] Although many observers felt a political solution was necessary, the Turkish military sought to destroy the PKK outright by cutting off its head.

Decapitation

Öcalan was captured on February 15, 1999. Looking dazed and fearful on Turkish national television, he told his captors, "If the truth needs to be told, I love Turkey and the Turkish nation, and I want to serve it." He added, "Let there be no torture or anything." The circumstance of his abduction by Turkish Special Forces was one of political intrigue. Syria, the country that for years served as the PKK headquarters, was pressured to expel him in October 1998. The rebel leader then became a fugitive, living briefly in Russia, Italy, and Greece until his capture in Nairobi, Kenya. Both the United States and Israel were complicit in the intrigue. Although the Clinton administration denied any "direct involvement," U.S. intelligence tracked the fugitive by eavesdropping on his cell phone and sharing the details with Turkish authorities. After sheltering Öcalan at its embassy in Kenya, Greek officials handed him over to Turkish commandos. The rebel leader was then transported to a prison on the island of Imrali, located a four-hour ferry boat ride across the Marmara Sea from Istanbul.[36]

Turkish officials did not provide Öcalan legal counsel at the time of his detention, which would come back to haunt Ankara. In June 1999, after a nine-day trial, Öcalan was found guilty of treason and sentenced to hanging. But officials paused, weighing the cost of making him a martyr. As it turned out, in 2002 Turkey did away with capital punishment in order to implement necessary reforms for applying for EU membership. Later, in 2005, the European Court for Human Rights ruled that Öcalan's case should be reopened because the trial was not fair. In addition to the failure to provide the defendant with an attorney in a timely fashion, the state security court that tried him was deemed inappropriate for its lack of independence and impartiality.[37] Subsequent petitions were made for retrial, but they were rejected by the Turkish judicial system. The European Court lost interest in the matter after determining that Öcalan's treatment and prison conditions had improved. In retrospect, Turkish military officers generally believe that not executing Öcalan was a major mistake.[38]

After Öcalan's capture, the bulk of his fighters withdrew from Turkey to northern Iraq. In the process, the resistance movement became greatly splintered and confused as the PKK leader sent many conflicting signals and messages back to his followers. In 2002, the PKK officially changed its name to the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (KADEK) and Öcalan was identified as its president. Soon thereafter the group changed its name again, this time to Kongra Gel. Commentators began referring to the entity as PKK/KADEK/Kongra Gel. Much to the chagrin of the radical base, Öcalan began calling for dialogue and a democratic solution to the Kurdish question. Later, he suggested confederation as

the answer. He even went so far as to denounce as dangerous and primitive those who continue to champion the creation of a Kurdish state. No matter, the unilateral cease-fire that had been in effect since September 1, 1998, was lifted. In its communiqué of June 2004, Kongra Gel bitterly explained that it was "senseless" to continue the cease-fire "in the face of the operations to exterminate our forces by the Turkish state."[39]

THE CONTINUAL KURDISH QUESTION

Though some declared victory over the PKK, while scolding those who all along thought a military solution was unachievable,[40] the fact is that the PKK was not put out of commission despite the capture of the group's founding leader. Turkish officials were mistaken if they thought decapitation would solve the "Kurdish question." As noted by Ben Connable and Martin Libicki, past COIN experience shows that decapitation, especially "if the government failed to address the root causes of the conflict,"[41] has seldom led to lasting peace. Indeed, Turkish authorities discovered that decapitation followed by a strong military offense was not going to be enough to end the insurgency. In June 2004, the PKK abandoned its unilateral cease-fire it had been maintaining for five years. Although weakened and retaining an armed force of about 5,000 militants, the PKK proceeded with a two-pronged approach: ambushing, planting landmines, and harassing with long-range fire, in the eastern rural mountains of the Kurdish area coupled with targeting tourism spots in the western urban areas of the country.[42]

Compounding the complexity was the geopolitical fallout from the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. On one hand, Turkey gained some advantage with a revived international commitment against terrorism whereby Western nations upgraded their official lists of designated terrorist groups. Ankara, of course, had long considered the PKK a terrorist group (as did the United States, which in 1997 officially placed the group on its terrorist list),[43] but had limited success in persuading other countries. Part of the problem was the sympathy felt toward an ethnic minority suffering human rights abuse by the Turkish government. On March 28, 2001, almost six months prior to the attacks on New York and Washington, the United Kingdom had placed the PKK on its terror list. Finally, in the spring of 2002, the PKK was placed on the EU list, which led to the targeting of the group's funding, the freezing of its assets, and the imposing of travel restrictions on affiliate individuals. Some rationalized the designation as leverage to pressure Ankara to improve its treatment of the Kurdish people. For Kurdish resisters, the terror designation was a betrayal.[44]

After the September 11 attacks the United States conducted the invasion of Iraq, an action that led to a strain in Turkish-American relations. Ankara denied Washington's request to use Turkish territory from which to carry out the war. Most Turkish military commanders now look back on that decision of March 1, 2003, as a terrible mistake. They believe that had they entered into an agreement with the American military, they would have been positioned to go after the PKK in northern Iraq. As it turned out, a self-rule Kurdish state came into existence in northern Iraq. The tensions between the United States and Turkey were further exacerbated by the "hood incident" of July 4, 2003, involving U.S. troops in Suleimaniya arresting and hooding Turkish Special Forces' soldiers who were apparently on some clandestine mission against a Kurdish leader. That episode was a great humiliation to the Turkish military, but it likely would not have occurred had there been a partnership between the two countries during the Iraq War.[45]

In November 2007, a Turkish air raid on abandoned villages in northern Iraq was carried out against the PKK.[46] The following year, after an eight-day ground offensive in Iraq, Turkish military authorities claimed that 243 PKK fighters were killed along with the destruction of 126 caves, 290 hideouts and shelters, 12 command centers, and 59 antiaircraft positions.[47] In 2009, the Turkish government began secret talks with the imprisoned Öcalan. That same year Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, shepherded reforms, allowing the Kurds greater cultural freedom.[48] Meanwhile, the Syrian civil war that began in 2011 resulted in new challenges for Turkey with respect to the Kurdish question. By supporting the opposition movement's bid to overthrow the Hafez Assad regime, Erdogan unwittingly created a crisis on his border with Syria. Faced with more pressing concerns in other parts of the country, Assad withdrew his forces along the border, thus giving Syrian Kurds heightened levels of autonomy. This empowered the Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat (PYD, or the Democratic Union Party), which is considered a franchise of the PKK.[49] (The PYD, it can be noted, had earlier received training by the PKK in the Kurdish region of Iraq.[50])

PKK attacks resumed and Turkish fighter jets pounded PKK camps in northern Iraq. By 2012, the PKK hierarchy insisted that there would not be any let up of the violence until Öcalan's solitary confinement came to an end. At the same time, PKK prisoners, numbering in the hundreds, were undergoing hunger strikes.[51] The guerrilla war that year resulted in over 600 deaths of which most were Kurds. Both sides concluded that a military solution to the crisis would never be achieved. That December Turkey announced the resumption of talks with Öcalan. In January 2013 the prisoner started receiving better treatment, including the installation of a television in his jail cell. An apparent breakthrough emerged in

March 2013 with Öcalan calling on his PKK followers to observe an immediate cease-fire. "A door is opening from the armed struggle toward the democratic struggle," Öcalan proclaimed. "This is not an end. This is a new start." As a goodwill gesture, the PKK rebels released eight Turkish soldiers and officials that they had earlier taken captive. However, Öcalan did not order his comrades to surrender or give up weapons, but rather to retreat to northern Iraq.[52]

LESSONS LEARNED

As noted by Lydia Khalil, a major failing of Turkish authorities was their assumption that an insurgency can be crushed in a quick and decisive manner and without political compromise. On numerous occasions over the years the PKK was declared defeated, only for the PKK to resume attacks. Not only did this undermine the credibility of the government, but it also enhanced the status of the PKK. After decapitation, again the Turkish military assumed that they had delivered a fatal blow. Turkish authorities seemed to disregard the view that COIN is a protracted endeavor. In addition, the intensity of its strategy of total war, including the scorched earth campaign conducted against the Kurdish villages, invariably made the government seem weak because of the perception that since it could not find the insurgents it was taking out its frustration on innocent villagers. A major negative factor of total war is that it forces each citizen to take a side, with the resulting alienation tending to produce a public relations gain for the insurgents. Moreover, when total war spirals out of control, as it has on occasion in Turkey, the insurgents end up appearing as the more reasonable side.[53]

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CHAPTER 12

Russian Counterinsurgency in Chechnya, 1994–96

Peter J. Rainow

The war Russia waged in Chechnya in 1994–96 was fought with great dynamics and evolving strategic and tactical patterns of regular and counterinsurgency operations. It brought many military and political surprises for the participants as well as for outsiders. The war by its scale and weapons and troops involved as well as by its casualties was one of the largest European wars since 1945, second only to the Yugoslav wars. It was also one of the largest local conflicts during the last decade of the twentieth century and undoubtedly the biggest one on the territory of the former Soviet Union.

The First Chechen War of 1994–96 ended with the first Russian defeat since the Afghan War (1979–89) and the only clear military, political, and territorial defeat since the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05. The lessons of the First Chechen War are of great importance due to the ongoing Russian counterinsurgency operations in the region. The local wars and conflicts are developing as "the most pressing security threat" to the civilized world.[1] That is why an analysis of the Russian debacle in Chechnya can shed light on the conditions and characteristics of wars to come.

THE DECISION TO INTERVENE AND THE PLANNING OF THE CAMPAIGN

The decision to launch a large-scale military operation when the Caucasian winter was approaching appears to be the most obvious Russian military blunder at the very beginning of the war. In a broader sense, the First Chechen War came at the wrong time for Moscow because

of the unprecedented decline of Russian power. Chechnya itself was symbolic of the fall of the former superpower. The Chechen Republic declared its complete independence from Russia in November 1991, even before the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union. Moscow never recognized Chechen independence, but the post-Soviet economic and political turmoil allowed the Chechens to survive, exploiting the unlimited economic resources almost unlimitedly and in a semi-criminal manner.

The Kremlin's decision to crush the Chechen independence was influenced by several interdependent factors, which developed by 1994. These are as follows: first, the incompetence and irresponsibility of Chechen authorities, the almost total breakdown of law and order within the republic even in very loose post-Soviet terms, and large-scale human rights abuse. These realities as well as the unresolved status of Chechnya created the direct threat of the expansion of organized crime and terrorism beyond Chechen borders.[2] Second, the increasing violent and repressive nature of General Dudayev's regime had led to large-scale domestic unrest and then to a civil war in Chechnya with a prospective destabilizing impact across all northern Caucasus.[3] Third, the disastrous fiasco of anti-Dudayev forces during a November 1994 raid on Grozny despite massive Russia's support and its direct involvement in that military operation. This enormously damaged Moscow's prestige in its north Caucasian provinces and created the risk of a potential chain reaction of the riots across the entire region.[4] Fourth, Chechen domestic troubles could provoke the adventurous and unpredictable Dudayev to apply for support from neighboring Muslim republics and thus encourage an all-Caucasian war against Moscow's rule.[5] And last, the Russian political elite grew increasingly concerned at the instability in the Caucasus and in Chechnya—particularly where the Baku-Novorossiisk pipeline lay—undermining Russia's vital strategic interests in the developing "Great Game" for Caspian oil.[6]

That is why Moscow concluded that the Chechen crisis presented a clear danger and an urgent challenge to Russian national security and it had to be resolved by military force.[7] In October 1994, the Special Operational Group on Chechnya under Colonel General Anatoly Kvashnin was organized by the Russian General Staff to prepare the intervention.[8] Despite well-known controversial statements from top Russian military commanders about the expected character of the operation—ranging from overoptimistic to extremely grim—it seems in retrospect that the Russian military command had failed to grasp the nature of the coming war. Instead of a rapid police action against a disintegrating rogue republic, the Russian army had to face "a quasi-Muslim, well-armed state, led by [a] committed core of dedicated fighters."[9]

The creation of a competent military force was the only field in which the Dudayev regime succeeded, thanks to the huge arsenal Russian

troops left behind when they withdrew from Chechnya in June 1992. By December 1994 General Dudayev had significant and effective military potential. The Chechen armed forces fell into three main organizational and functional categories: the Chechen standing army of 11,000–16,000 troops, the National Guard numbering 62,000 men, and the local self-defense forces of 30,000 men.

Additionally, the Presidential Palace, the Interior Ministry, the Department of State Security, and the Civil Defense Service had their own military formations. The Chechens also had 98 tanks (T-72s and T-62s), 150 armored vehicles (BTR-70s), and almost 300 guns and mortars. The Chechen Air Force had nearly 265 aircraft: 3 MiG-17 fighters, 2 MiG 15 UTIs, 6 An-2s, 119 L-29 and L-39 training aircraft, 2 Mi-8 helicopters, and 41 experienced pilots.[10]

Against these forces the Russians assembled 23,700 troops, 80 tanks, 208 armored personnel carriers, and 182 guns and mortars.[11] Russian commanders were convinced that highly decentralized Chechen formations could not stand against regular forces. To complete the full circle of classic military blunders, Russian military planners overestimated their own military potential while simultaneously underestimating the Chechens'.

The state of the Russian military was deeply affected by this multifaceted and staggering crisis. A number of characteristics influenced the combat performance of Russian troops in Chechnya, including the overwhelming (on the level from 35 to 40 percent) shortage of manpower and the critical deficiency of combat ready detachments. This forced the Russian High Command to rely heavily on airborne troops as those with the highest strength levels (almost 85 percent) as well as to mix units from ground forces, marines, internal troops, and other security and police agencies from all over the country. These measures aggravated significantly interservice coordination.[12] Russian troops also suffered from a critical shortage of combat training, particularly in urban and mountainous terrain. Combat training of the air force personnel also stood at a critical level, with their training level 60 percent below the necessary minimum.[13] In addition, the vast majority of Russian weaponry and equipment (about 70 percent) was obsolete.[14] Due to the lack of material resources many tanks (T-72s and even T-80s) and almost all attack helicopters entered Chechnya without effective protection against the insurgents' weapons. Additionally, all Russian combat helicopters (Mi-24s, Mi-8s, and Mi-6s) were unable to operate and deploy their weapons effectively at night and in adverse weather conditions.[15]

The use of Russian conscripts in a domestic conflict without clearly defined political goals revitalized the Afghan syndrome, and contributed to an unwillingness to fight. Incompetence of military commanders, particularly at the beginning of the war, and widespread corruption lowered

the troops' morale even more. The Russian officer corps disagreed amongst themselves about the objectives and best manner of conducting operations in Chechnya. Compounding these already formidable problems, a number of commanders felt concern about Russia's military unpreparedness.[16] According to Anatol Lieven, some 577 officers of all ranks were believed to have been disciplined, have been sacked, or have left the army in protest against the war.[17]

All these ills of the Russian army overlapped during the conflict and contributed considerably to Russian military mistakes and failures at the beginning of the war as well as to their final defeat. The poor training of troops as well as obsolete munitions, and poor communications rendered the coordination between detachments in combat extremely complex. Additionally, shortage of qualified personnel precluded the use of those few precision-guided munitions that the Russian military had at its disposal, such as the new Ka-50 and Mi-28 helicopters or precision artillery shells and missiles.

Additionally, there were numerous mistakes in operational planning, which contributed to Russia's debacle in Chechnya. "Errors in planning and direction of the campaign in Chechnya were so colossal, that they were almost criminal," wrote Stephen Cimbala in his comprehensive study of Russia's difficulties with small wars.[18] The failure of strategic planning in the Chechen War may be attributed to a number of interrelated factors, the most important of which will be considered here.

First, the Russian intelligence community, struggling with substantial budget and personnel problems, failed to anticipate the scale of the conflict and the operational difficulties facing an army fighting in Chechnya. The Russian intelligence services were unable to employ effective special operations to decapitate the insurgent leadership on the model of the Afghan scenario of December 1979, in which Soviet forces murdered the prime minister. Additionally, they both vastly underestimated the strength of Chechen forces and overestimated the potential of anti-Dudayev opposition in Chechnya.[19] Thus, the Russian political and military leadership was absolutely convinced that a large-scale military demonstration in Chechnya would be enough to restore constitutional order in the breakaway republic.

Other factors help explain the failure of Russian strategic planning. The military decision-making process, for instance, witnessed the collapse of the routine chain of command in the Ministry of Defense and in the North Caucasian Military District. There were numerous complaints within the Russian High Command about the poor state of preparedness and the overstretched condition of the Russian army on the eve of its military adventure in Chechnya.[20] To solve this problem, officials created what amounted to an extremely cumbersome command structure, involving several ministries. This aggravated the already difficult coordination

of services employed in, and military decision-making with respect to, Chechnya.[21]

Finally, the military option was dictated very much by domestic Russian politics. The strengthening influence of neo-imperialist and nationalist elements within the Russian political elite, as well as the growing trend to impose centralized control over Russia's rebellious regions, significantly facilitated the decision to invade Chechnya.[22] The lack of a proper and clear decision-making mechanism in Russia's Caucasian policy and President Yeltsin's struggle for survival in the mix of secrecy, corruption, and improvization of Kremlin politics contributed significantly to the fatal decision to embark on war. As one high-ranking official said: "We need a small victorious war to raise the President's rating"—thus following the American example of quick and decisive intervention in Haiti in 1994.[23] Additionally, the Kremlin felt considerable concern about the rising influence of Ruslan Khasbulatov—a long-term rival of Yeltsin within the anti-Dudayev camp.[24]

Thus, the dangerous and self-destructive combination of politico-military incompetence, self-deception, arrogance, poor intelligence, and chaotic decision-making propelled the poor-quality Russian army into Chechnya, where a once great European army found itself at war on the eve of a deadly Caucasian winter, when ground operations were slowed by mud and snow, and where low clouds and fog hampered effective air support by 95 percent.

THE STRATEGIES OF THE ANTAGONISTS AND THE COURSE OF THE WAR

The Russian army returned to ground where it had struggled with insurgents operation in mountainous conditions in one of the longest wars in Russian history. In the Caucasian war of 1817–64 Russian strength in numbers and firepower was matched by difficult terrain and by the skillful performance of Chechen guerrillas. Having learned from their initial mistakes the Russians under General Aleksey Yermolov developed a strategy of siege and total war, which led them to final military victory.[25]

The modernized version of the "Yermolov doctrine" should have fashioned Russian operations in Chechnya as a series of consecutive steps. These would include: a prolonged air campaign intended to disrupt the enemy's communications, a limited invasion and occupation of the northern Chechen plains, and air bombardments and constant commando raids on the rebels' strongholds.[26] Instead, Russian strategy in Chechnya evolved from a police action and military demonstration to a full-scale blitzkrieg-style invasion, overestimating its own abilities as well as underestimating its opponents'. To counter the Russian strategy the

Chechen High Command elaborated its own approach to war, based on attrition as well as on indirect action, surprise, and improvization. As Lester Grau noted: "the Russian war in Chechnya was planned as a rapid war of annihilation and became a bloody, protracted war of attrition."[27]

At the beginning of the war and even before the start of open hostilities the Russian Air Force almost totally destroyed all Chechen airfields—Grozny, Khankala, and Kalinovskaya—and wiped out all 251 Chechen aircraft—military and civilian alike. This victory came easily—Chechens simply lacked effective air defense; they did not possess, for instance, radar at all. Thus, at the beginning of large-scale ground operations the Russians enjoyed complete command in the air, prompting some analysts to observe that the short and effective Russian air campaign was instrumental in preventing possible Chechen strikes on Russian territory.[28] The Russian Air Force also struck Chechen strategic targets in Grozny and its vicinity, though unfavorable weather conditions reduced the effect of this bombing.

On the ground Russian troops advanced on Grozny along three axes: the Northern Task Force from Mozdok, the Western Task Force from Vladikavkaz, and the South-Eastern Task Force from Kizliar. The Russian desire to make an impressive military demonstration by moving through the population centers of border areas proved counterproductive: troops of the Western and South-Eastern Task Forces were effectively slowed and later blocked by civilian protests in Ingushetia and Dagestan. This allowed the Chechen insurgent commanders to concentrate their forces against the Russian Northern Task Force, attacking heavily armored Russian columns near Dolinskoe village with multiple launched rocket systems on December 13, 1994. Using their supremacy in organization and firepower, the Russians outmaneuvered the Chechens and managed to cross the Terek River and take Romanovskoe, Tolstoy-Yurt, and Grozny's Severny airport. The advancing Russian troops then proceeded to execute a surprise dash from Tolstoy-Yurt to the southeastern outskirts of Grozny, capturing the second airfield at Khankala and cutting off the strategic Rostov-Baku highway and the Chechens' chief supply routes from Argun to Grozny.

According to official estimates the battles for the northeastern approaches to Grozny resulted in 44 men killed—though the press claimed more than 500 dead, and loss of 150 tanks and armored vehicles destroyed on the Russian side. The Chechens declared a loss of 1,850 fighters and civilians and about 40 tanks and armored vehicles The civilian protests and a mobile defense enabled the Chechens to slow the Russian advance and thus to gain time to prepare the defense of Grozny. Much to the Chechens' advantage, the Russians failed to seal the city completely due to shortage of troops.

The capture of Grozny should have constituted the culmination of the preplanned military police action the Russians had envisioned for operations in Chechnya. The order of battle and initial objectives of the belligerents therefore bears examination. The Russians had 38,000 troops, 230 tanks, 454 armored vehicles, and 338 guns and mortars. The High Command intended to crush the Chechen defense by four simultaneous armor assaults to converge from the north, the northeast, the east, and the west, to join its forces in the center of the city, seize key streets and bridges inside the Chechen capital, disarm the rebels, and finally, pacify Grozny. The key task was assigned to the Northern and Western Task Forces—to capture bridges across the Sunzha River and to secure the downtown. This apparently perfectly conceived plan suffered, nevertheless, from some significant defects: the Russians, for instance, did not possess enough infantry to support their armor columns. The plan also critically depended on the questionable ability of Russian units to coordinate their movements with one another. Moreover, bad weather and complex urban terrain closed air and artillery support to the assaulting troops.[29] The most obvious blunder of the Russian plan was its ignorance of any prospects for serious Chechen resistance, with only 5,000 Russian troops assigned to the first assault.

With respect to Chechen forces, according to some estimates, at the beginning of the battle the Chechens deployed almost 15,000 troops, 50 tanks, 100 armored vehicles, 30 "Grad" Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), 60 guns and mortars,[30] and about 150 antiaircraft guns.[31] The Chechen High Command intended to exhaust Russian troops in fierce battles, using three consecutive lines of defense in the city. The cornerstone of Chechen strategy entailed using the center of Grozny as a giant trap for the advancing Russians—to surround them, simultaneously to concentrate their own forces, and to obtain tactical and operational superiority over their opponents.

The Chechen strategy, more suitable for urban warfare, succeeded. The Russian assault on the New Year Eve deteriorated into almost complete disaster, for while Russian troops were able to break through the outer perimeter of the insurgents' defense, in city center the Chechens surrounded Russian tank columns with weak infantry support—nearly annihilating them—like the 131th Maikop Motor-Rifle Brigade from the North-Eastern Task Force. The Russians also lost control over most of their remaining units trapped inside Grozny. Facing a desperate situation the Russians relieved and replaced the commanders of two task forces, regrouped and reinforced their troops with detachments from other military districts and from three fleets, and engaged in fierce house-to-house fighting in Grozny. Under the cover of the heaviest and most indiscriminate air and artillery bombardment the newly led Russian task forces—the Southern, under Lieutenant General Ivan Babichev and the Northern

led by the energetic Major General Lev Rokhlin—joined forces in the center of the city, where Russian marines hoisted the St. Andrew naval ensign at the entrance to the Presidential Palace—the center of the Chechen defense. Undaunted, insurgents attempted to organize a new frontline along the Sunzha River and launched fierce counterattacks—but failed. By February 3, 1995, Grozny was in Russian hands, with heavy casualties suffered by both sides in bitter fighting. According to the defense minister, General Pavel Grachev, Russian losses were 534 men killed, though other sources estimated that between 1,146 and 1,800 troops were killed and wounded, with 225 armored vehicles, including 62 tanks, totally destroyed.[32] Chechen losses numbered between 2,000 and 2,500 killed, and 26 tanks, 63 guns, and 40 armored vehicles destroyed.[33]

It was a much-needed Russian victory. Having secured Grozny, the Russians thereby occupied the political center and symbol of the Dudayev regime and gained control over strategic passes through the mountains and the Khankala Gorge into the Chechen flatlands. At the same time, the battle of Grozny gave the Chechens the opportunity to retreat in good order, regroup and organize resistance in central and southern Chechnya, and most importantly to prepare for a long guerrilla campaign. As General Dzhokhar Dudayev prophesied at the time: "The war will be very long. In my opinion it may last fifty years."[34]

The final victory in Grozny did not mean the end of the war in Chechnya[35]; rather, the battle demonstrated to the Russians the real nature of the developing war in Chechnya. Some Russian journalists described the war as "[an] ... incredibly horrible war that they have not witnessed since the year of 1941."[36] The Russian High Command was slow to adequately grasp these realities. At the Defense Ministry conference Pavel Grachev described the operation as a "special army operation" while General Anatolii Kvashnin spoke of the "real war" in Chechnya.[37] After Grozny no firm Chechen frontline existed, except in the Argun-Gudermes region, and the Russian High Command over-optimistically declared the end of operations.

"After the initial bloody storm of Grozny," noted Anatol Lieven "the 'modern' Russian army with its immense superiority in all the weapons needed for a decisive 'Clausewitzian' battle, usually tried to avoid such battles and proceeded by indirect and evasive means."[38]

By the reckoning of some analysts the Russian campaign in central Chechnya from February to June 1995 constituted the most successful one of the entire war. Having learned the lessons of Grozny, Russian troops experienced hereafter a prolonged period of fighting during which they maintained the strategic initiative, actively and skillfully using their air and firepower superiority, relied on mobility and airborne assaults, and employed infantry very cautiously in order to minimize their losses.[39]

At the beginning of their advance the Russians massed about 200,000 troops drawn from the army plus 18,000 interior troops in and around Chechnya.[40] Of these troops 55,000 were engaged in active combat. Chechen forces, numbering between 7,000 and 15,000 men, deployed 30 tanks and 15 MLRS divided into two formations: the Western Group and the Eastern Group, the latter of which formed the principal fighting force.[41] Two operations during the campaign in central Chechnya stand out as most important, the first consisting of the Argun-Gudermes-Shali Operation (March–April 1995), in which the Russian Northern Task Force outmaneuvered and suppressed the Chechens—using a combined arms operation consisting of an armor advance, a forced river crossing, and tactical airborne assault—and gained control over the important railway and road routes in the eastern part of Chechnya. The Shatoi-Vedeno-Bamut Operation (April–June 1995), in which the Russian South-Eastern Task Force under the cover of a heavy artillery barrage and air bombardment managed to break through the Chechen defense lines, crushed the resistance of the insurgents' small guerrilla groups, and captured the Bamut fortress after a stubborn siege and assault.

According to Russian military analysts, since the beginning of the war the Russians had by this stage lost more than 2,000 troops, while the Chechens had lost about 12,000 men.[42] The Chechens had also lost almost all their remaining armor. Other Russian sources estimated Russian losses by September 1995 as 1,650 troops killed and 6,263 wounded, and 2 aircraft, 5 helicopters, and 400 guns and mortars destroyed. Chechen losses were 2,230 fighters killed and 5,000 wounded. Total casualties, including civilians, suffered in the war in Chechnya are estimated at 40,000.[43]

By the end of their successful campaign the Russians had gained control of over 80 percent of the Chechen territory and almost all the population centers of the republic. With these results achieved the High Command passed chief responsibility to the interior troops in Chechnya. General Dudayev could still count on support from 40,000 to 45,000 volunteers in the mountains, but due to the tiny territory controlled by Dudayev, Russian analysts concluded that the Chechens faced miserable prospects in continuing to prosecute the war.[44] They also stressed the extreme shortage of Chechen material resources and Russia's unassailable control of the air over Chechnya.[45]

This complete disintegration of organized Chechen resistance obliged the Chechens to radically alter their strategy. While the Chechen chief of staff, Colonel (later General) Aslan Maskhadov, favored the continuation of the guerrilla campaign in the mountains, the famous warlord Shamil' Basaev chose a high-risk strategy—to take the war deep inside Russia proper, which stood vulnerable. His raid on Budyonnovsk—the hostage crisis and dramatic standstill there from June 13 to June 21,

1995—constituted the real turning point of the war. Mark Galeotti wrote at the time that the raid was the psychological "turning point, at which Moscow begins to reconsider the cost of its current operation in Chechnya and the possible virtues in negotiations."[46] There were various interpretations about the extent to which the Chechen High Command possessed genuine knowledge of the hostage-taking. Some analysts including those in Russian intelligence argued that this action was coordinated with General Dudayev.[47] Shamil' Basaev himself stressed that he and his men had lost all communications with Chechen High Command by June 1995.[48] Aslan Maskhadov had learned about the raid from the television.[49]

In contrast to several earlier Russian peace initiatives the Kremlin felt obliged to engage in peace talks after Budyonnovsk under the pressure imposed by the ferocious threat of terrorism. From July to December 1995 negotiations between the Russians and the Chechens, including representatives of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe participation, took place contemporaneously with continued fighting. Both sides, the Russian army and the Chechen militants alike, viewed these talks and numerous cease-fire agreements merely as an opportunity for a breathing space in which to gain time in order to regroup their forces, to consolidate their respective positions, and to prepare for a new round of fighting.

The defense minister, General Pavel Grachev, clearly defined Russian strategy in these new circumstances: "the negotiations and military operations must continue hand in hand."[50] This "Grachev Doctrine" stressed the need to combine military pressure on the separatists with the search for a political solution on Russian terms, and was obviously aimed at regaining the strategic initiative. Yet in the field the Russians found themselves deadlocked in a classic colonial war: while they controlled military posts and bases across almost all Chechnya, separatists laid ambushes along supply routes and constantly attached command and communication centers. In the course of all major military operations the Russians regularly emerged victorious—yet they failed to establish effective control on the ground. Frustratingly, federal troops were obliged to storm and occupy many towns and villages again and again.[51] Difficult terrain—favorable to the separatists—made it almost impossible to seal the Chechen borders completely and cut off the supply routes of the rebels and thus isolate the theater of war effectively.[52] Even the Russians' major success—the death of General Dudayev on April 21–22, 1996, by a Russian air strike—could not change the course of the conflict, despite the limited psychological and propaganda value derived.

The military stalemate weakened the second track of Russia's Chechen policy—the pursuit of a favorable peace settlement in the republic. The Kremlin ignored numerous proposals to save face by the unilateral de-escalation of the conflict and the withdrawal of its troops.[53]

The initiative proposed by some moderate Chechen politicians to demilitarize the conflict, to seek a compromise step-by-step solution on the basis of free elections in the republic, and to seek membership in the post-Soviet international association, the Commonwealth of Independent States, failed as well.[54]

Instead, the Kremlin tried to impose a pro-Russian puppet regime in Chechnya. Due to the lack of effective military support this strategy failed, but it succeeded in splitting Chechen society and driving Chechen politics into complete chaos. The Russian military and civilian authorities in the republic were not successful in obtaining real and solid Chechen support. The Russian authorities in Chechnya were increasingly dependent on Moscow's protégées in Chechnya who were deeply involved in Russian domestic rivalries on the eve of presidential elections of 1996. The growing instability in Chechnya as well as the wave of terrorist attacks against some Russian high-ranking officials in the republic in September and October 1995—allegedly committed by the hard-liners within the Chechen resistance—dashed any hope for a negotiated solution of the conflict.[55]

Chechen strategy in this period of the war effectively integrated the military and political goals of the separatists. On the one hand, the Chechens successfully established themselves as very effective guerrilla fighters, using highly mobile operations, deadly ambushes, and surprise strikes on Russian forces.[56] The guerrillas enjoyed free run of the territory outside Russian garrison towns, using their freedom to strike targets when and where they chose.[57] The Chechen attack on Gudermes, Urus-Martan, and Achkhoi-Martan in December 1995 clearly demonstrated the inability of the Russian military to control the situation in the republic. The massive assault of some 1,800 separatists on Grozny between March 6 and 11, 1996—during a year of Russian presidential elections in Russia—clearly damaged Moscow's prestige and influence in Chechnya.[58]

On the other hand, in order to capitalize on the psychological impact of dramatic shocks on the Russian public, the Chechen warlord Salman Raduyev undertook another large-scale raid on Kizliar in neighboring Dagestan during January 9–18, 1996. The massive Russian operation against the insurgents and standstill in Pervomaiskoe revealed a deep demoralization of the Russian army, including elite units.[59] While attempting to claim the final retreat of the insurgents as a military victory, the Russian High Command, nevertheless, grudgingly admitted its inability to eliminate terrorism and insurgency in Chechnya.[60]

By the summer of 1996 the course of the Chechen War reached an unstable military equilibrium between the belligerents.[61] To change it radically in their favor the Chechens needed to challenge the Russians openly and in a major conventional engagement. As such, the final Chechen assault

on Grozny was "the most daring and ambitious operation in the twenty-month war."[62] The Russians had some 7,500 interior troops inside the city and army personnel in the neighboring military bases at Khankala and Severny. The whole garrison consisted of some 12,000 men.[63] According to Russian estimates, the Chechens possessed a manpower potential about 6,000.[64] The separatists planned their operation thoroughly and in close secrecy. The key to success rested with the ability of the rebels to strike the Russians simultaneously at all major strategic points in Chechnya in order to deny maneuverability to the enemy. The operational plan depended upon the high mobility from Chechen forces, the effective blockade of Russian units, and the organizing of deadly ambushes on Russians' likely supply routes. Most importantly, the plan clearly defined the political and strategic goal of the operation—to gain control over Grozny and conclusively demonstrate Russia's inability to win the war.[65]

Russian troops were completely surprised by the large-scale insurgent attack on major Chechen cities between August 6 and 16, 1996. The rebels succeeded in capturing Argun and Gudermes, infiltrated Grozny, and rapidly increased their forces from an initial approximately 500 men to 2,000 men. They isolated Russian units, cut off almost all supply routes, engaged Russian reinforcements in a series of ambushes, and gained control over the center of Grozny.[66] The Russians tried to turn the battle in their favor, employing combined assault groups of paratroopers and infantry with armor and artillery support, yet they again found themselves engaged in fierce urban fighting.[67]

During the battle the Russians lost between 265 and 500 troops, more than 1,000 men wounded, and over 100 tanks and armored vehicles and several helicopters destroyed or badly damaged.[68] The Russians had secured the kind of direct engagement with the enemy that they had been seeking for so long—only for it to end in almost complete disaster. Facing the stark reality of having to renew the war afresh with an exhausted army, the Russians were forced to conclude a truce.[69] A peace agreement was finally concluded on August 23, 1996, between the new secretary of the (Russian) Security Council, General Alexander Lebed—a long-term critic of the war—and the Chechen commander-in-chief, General Aslan Maskhadov. According to the agreement, Russian troops withdrew from Chechnya and the Chechen problem would await final resolution, but both sides agreed to settle their future relations under the principles of international law, thus recognizing *de facto* Chechen independence.[70]

THE TACTICS OF THE WAR

The complex terrain of Chechnya, including mountains, gorges, and numerous rivers rendered its territory extremely well-suited for mobile and protracted guerrilla warfare. The nature of the Russian military,

in its turn, also had a profound influence on the tactical dimension of the war. First, due to the violent nature of Chechnya's culture and history—an almost permanent state of rebellion against Russia as well as the phenomenon of continuous clan and tribal struggle and the record of the Chechens as the most rebellious people in the Russian/Soviet empire, with significant influence exercised by Islamic sects within Chechen society—this small nation developed as a staunch, fearless, and merciless antagonist of Russia. Second, the tribal traditions of the Chechens were instrumental in constructing a strong, broad-based and survivable network of guerrilla resistance. Third, the cellular clan structure of Chechen society transformed rebel formations into decentralized and highly mobile units of devoted fighters, and masters of surprise attacks and ambushes. "The social and cultural characteristics of Chechens, especially their Islamic faith and strong clan and tribal relationship made them formidable opponents fighting on their own ground."[71]

All of these factors made it extremely difficult for the Russians to understand the real complexity of Chechen society and led them to a fatal underestimation of the military skills and abilities of their opponents. The Chechens, in their turn, understood the strengths and vulnerabilities of the Russian army perfectly well. Many of the Chechen military commanders had been experienced officers of the former Soviet army and managed successfully to convert Chechen societal characteristics into tactical advantages on the battlefield, developing them further in the course of the war to achieve strategic dominance.

Complete air superiority constituted the single major factor contributing to Russian dominance in the *conventional* realm of the fighting in Chechnya. The Russian Air Force (Tu-22 M3 bombers and Su-17, Su-24, and Su-25 ground attack aircraft) was employed to eliminate the Chechen Air Force and provide air cover and close support for advancing ground troops. Russian aviation launched massive bombardments and precision strikes on mobile insurgent formations and pockets of defense,[72] while ISu-27 and MiG-31 aircraft were used on patrol missions in Chechen airspace.

At the same time, the effectiveness of the massive employment of Mi-24 and Mi-8 combat helicopters for close support was limited due to obsolete navigation equipment. This and insufficient protection enabled the Chechens to damage several helicopters as well as a few fixed-wing aircraft despite the absence of a Chechen air defense system.[73] For the movement and supply of their troops Russians used various types of heavy transport planes, the IL-76, An-124-100, An-22, and the An-12, as well as Mi-24 transport helicopters.[74]

On the ground the Russian army employed traditional armored assaults. The Chechens, in turn, developed successful countermeasures to compensate for their adversary's superiority in conventional terms.

In major engagements with the Russians in various approaches to Grozny—in Chervlennaya, Pervomaisk, and Petropavlovskaya—the Chechens employed guerrilla "hit-and-run" tactics and ambushes, using MLRS and placing mortars and grenade launchers on tracked and wheeled vehicles.[75]

The battles in Grozny and other Chechen cities contributed significantly to changes in the theory and practice of modern warfare, following in the traditions of twentieth century urban combat, particularly the assaults on cities during the Second World War such as at Stalingrad, Caen, and Warsaw as well as in fighting in built-up areas like Budapest and Port Said in 1956, Jerusalem in 1967, Saigon and Hue in 1968, Beirut from 1975 to 1977 and again in 1982, and Mogadishu in 1993. Over time, Chechen tactics in their own urban engagements involved a series of mutually reinforcing elements. First, the Chechens actively exploited the numerous vulnerabilities of the highly centralized and hierarchical Russian military: their tactical inflexibility, lack of initiative, the poor coordination between their units, weak reconnaissance, and their lack of training in street fighting.[76] Second, Chechen fighters grasped the importance of moving the focus of combat from the outer perimeter of Grozny to its center in order to render the Russian superiority in armor, artillery, and air power almost useless.[77] Third, the Chechen defenders organized themselves into small, decentralized groups, able to surprise opposing units, break them up, and surround them.[78] Finally, they exploited their extensive knowledge of the city's terrain and infrastructure to set up deadly ambushes for advancing Russian columns by a combination of emulated Second World War urban combat and guerrilla "hit-and-run" tactics.[79]

An important Chechen tactical innovation was the introduction of urban combat groups divided into small, autonomous and mobile antiarmor squads in tracked and wheeled vehicles. The typical squad consisted of a grenadier armed with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, a sniper, and a third fighter with a light machine gun. During their final assault on Grozny in August 1996, the Chechens improved the structure of their antiarmor squad and developed it as one grenadier, one to two snipers, two to three riflemen, and one machine-gun operator.[80] These squads maintained close communications via portable radio transmitters and cellular phones. They effectively engaged Russian troops by striking the first and the last vehicle in armor columns, thus bringing the whole force to a halt. Then, armor destroyers usually positioned on the ground level, in second and third stories, and in the basements of buildings struck at the vulnerable parts of T-72 and T-80 tanks and BMD-1, BMP-2, and BTR-80 troop carriers. The Chechens benefited from the fact that at the beginning of the war Russian armor suffered from inadequate protection.[81]

The initial Russian debacle in Grozny revealed that the army was unprepared for the Chechens' unconventional form of urban fighting.[82]

The Russian High Command duly introduced some tactical changes including the introduction of additional armor protection for tanks, troop carriers, and self-propelled howitzers. Some Russian observers also stressed the urgent need for elaboration of the specialized armor for urban warfare.[83] In addition, federal forces ceased to employ their tactics of the large-scale advance and created battalion-level assault task forces with dedicated tank, artillery, and mortar support.[84] With respect to close "house-to-house" fighting the Russians introduced small, autonomous assault groups with strong sniper support.[85] The Russians also improved coordination between units and detachments down to the platoon level[86] They also provided close heavy artillery support for the assault by self-propelled howitzers and used track-mounted antiaircraft guns and attack helicopters against enemy snipers on multi-storied buildings.[87] The Russians also appreciated the benefits of assigning assault groups to specific sectors of the city and imposing a total blockade around it.[88] While this method proved to be effective in small and medium-sized Chechen towns, some Western observers questioned its applicability to a large modern city, like Grozny.[89] It should be noted, also, that the Russians were never able to seal off the Chechen capital completely during the war.

During the intense guerrilla war in Chechnya from June 1995 to July 1996 the separatists employed the effective combination of classic partisan "hit-and-run" attacks, diversions, and modernized versions of the traditional Chechen tactic of ambushes in wooded and mountainous terrain.[90] At the same time, some additional features characterized the war. First, the Chechens successfully employed their strong tribal traditions and clan relationships in creating an effective network for the flow of regular and reliable manpower, ammunition, intelligence, communication, and logistics support for the guerrilla groups. Additionally, Chechen self-defense units in towns and villages closely cooperated with the guerrillas and proved very instrumental in keeping the Russians under growing pressure from fierce battles of "semi-guerrilla war," as Aslan Maskhadov called it, in almost all population centers across Chechnya.[91]

Secondly, the separatists, facing overwhelming Russian military superiority, turned to large-scale hostage taking, kidnappings, bombings, and other forms of terrorism in Chechnya as well as in Russia itself. Some experts argue that in this way the Chechens have made their unique contribution to insurgency, introducing so-called military terrorism or military diversion operation. Stasys Knezys and Romanus Sedlickas explain military terrorism thus: "[An] act of terrorism which is conducted by a military force as part of an overall military campaign or for a military purpose."[92] Although Chechen terrorist acts succeeded in increasing the cost of the war for the Russian military and public as well, the question remains: to what extent were strikes on the medical installations in

Budyonnovsk and Kizliar coordinated with other spheres of Chechen military activity, and subordinated to broad strategic and operational goals, rather than serving merely as spontaneous acts of anger and revenge, influenced by the criminal and brutal character of the fighting in which many Chechen warlords increasingly engaged. For example, the Raduyev raid on Kizliar and his engagement with federal forces in Pervomaiskoe in Dagestan were terribly counterproductive from the point of view of the separatists' anti-Russian "grand strategy," so turning the neighboring Muslim republic against the Chechen cause.[93]

In the course of its counterinsurgency operations the Russian military suffered heavily from its inflexibility, poor intelligence, heavy reliance on stationary military garrisons, and inability to create an effective system of control and pacification of the population.[94] Moreover, the Russians were unable to prevent the guerrillas from infiltrating occupied cities and towns in Chechnya.

During the guerrilla war in Chechnya the Russians demonstrated some ability to learn from their mistakes and failures, deploying relatively well-trained light infantry units as well as special forces capable of operating in forest and mountainous terrain in coordination with artillery and helicopter gunships. In addition, the protection of army trucks was improved considerably in order to decrease Russian losses suffered by separatist ambushes and diversions.[95] At the same time, as Russian operations in Pervomaiskoe revealed, lack of thorough planning and coordination as well as poor professionalism and weak combat motivation remained the ineradicable ills plaguing Russian counterinsurgency in Chechnya.

Several important features characterized information warfare in Chechnya: combat, particularly the urban form, demonstrated that the Chechens' means of communication—portable radio transmitters and cellular phones—turned out to be far more effective and reliable than the Russian ones.[96] Both sides also actively employed deception during the war. The Chechens frequently intercepted Russian radio communications and issued false and sometimes lethal orders by redirecting Russian aircraft, helicopters, and artillery against their own troops.[97] The Russians, in turn, several times succeeded in using tactical and strategic deception, such as during victorious operations in Gudermes and Shali in March and April 1995, to outmaneuver Chechen insurgents. Negotiations, political campaigns, and covert action as well as military and special operations in their various combinations were employed by the Russians and Chechens alike to influence the decisions and actions of their opponents, to provoke them into unfortunate and self-destructive reactions.[98]

In contrast to the Russians, the Chechens used psychological operations (PSYOPS) during the war. Timothy Thomas called PSYOPS "one of the most important aspects of the war in Chechnya."[99] The separatists established strong and influential access to Russian mass media, skillfully

taking advantage of the chaotic and unstable nature of Russian domestic politics, characterized by the continuous struggle between rival groups within the Yeltsin administration.[100] These contacts were instrumental in a propaganda campaign, which catalogued for a surprised Russian public the numerous mistakes and failures committed during the war and launched disinformation attacks, so strengthening the unwillingness of the Russian public to support an unpopular war, in turn demoralizing the Russian military and placing enormous pressure on Russia's policy-makers.[101]

The Russian army and intelligence were able to transform their technological and military superiority into a successful decapitating operation, using A-50 reconnaissance and Su-25 ground attack aircraft to eliminate the Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev. There were, nevertheless, some allegations over possible Western intelligence support in this operation.[102] Nonetheless, the death of Dzhokhar Dudayev did not lead to the decisive breakdown of the Chechen command and control system, due to the highly decentralized structure of the military and political organization of the Chechen resistance.

LESSONS OF THE WAR

"For the first time in nearly 300 years of Russian expansion in the North Caucasus the empire was receding and its army in retreat," wrote Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal on the aftermath of the Chechen War.[103] Russian troops withdrew completely from Chechnya by the end of November 1996. The war losses were as follows: Russian troops: 3,406 killed; 19,783 wounded; 616 missing in action; 432 prisoners of war, with the terms of withdrawal stipulating their return to Russia; some 300 tanks and armored vehicles, 8 helicopters; and 5 airplanes destroyed. Chechen fighters suffered 15,000 killed—unofficial estimates of civilian casualties claim between 80,000 and 100,000 killed—while the war cost an estimated: $150 to $200 billion.[104]

The historical significance of the First Chechen War of 1994–96 is twofold. First, it was the first proper war in which the post-Soviet Russian army sought to prove itself as a reliable military force in the defense of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation—and failed. Second, the First Chechen War as a local secessionist armed conflict shared a comparable as well as contrasting features with other local wars of the past century. In this way, as Timothy Thomas pointed out: "the fighting in Chechnya created another historical chapter in the annals of warfare that will merit study for decades."[105]

In terms of Russia's security posture in Europe in the post-Soviet era and with respect to its domestic stability as a former superpower, the defeat in Chechnya clearly demonstrated its military weakness.

As the Chechen War revealed the Russian army was unable to suppress the secessionist movement within Russia's own borders. Stephen Blank observed of Russia's post-Chechnya posture in the Caucasus: "Russian strategy has ignored the fundamental requirement of matching its goals to its real strengths . . . As in the 19th Century, imperial policies serve to arrest or inhibit domestic unrest. It did not work then and it certainly cannot work now when Russia cannot even subjugate Chechnya."[106]

Russia attempted to learn lessons from its experience in Chechnya. In some cases it worked; in others it did not. For example, the chaos prevalent in Russian military planning and the cumbersome and often incompetent command and control apparatus were seriously aggravated by changes of senior commanders. In 1994–96 Moscow replaced eight commanders in charge of the operation, yet with mixed results. The very fact of these changes had some counterproductive effects on troops' morale in action.

During the war, Russian operational art, strategy, and tactics evolved, occasionally enabling the Russians to prevail over Chechen insurgents; yet the Russian military were unable to outfight the Chechens who benefited from fighting on their ground and employing guerrilla tactics. Russian military history includes several examples of successful counterinsurgencies: in Poland, in the Caucasus, and in Central Asia in the nineteenth century, and in Central Asia, the western Ukraine, and in the Baltic states in the twentieth century. Nevertheless a strong combination of Soviet-era military ills—inflexibility, lack of imagination, and lack of initiative—together with problems of the Russian military of the 1990s—widespread corruption, poor intelligence and coordination, incompetence, lack of public support, and low morale—as well as an ill-conceived and unrealistic political strategy contributed significantly to Russian defeat.

POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC LESSONS

At the same time, the experience of defeat stimulated a process of rethinking about some of the Russian military's fundamental priorities and security policy. Specifically, the character and military consequences of the First Chechen War stimulated a growing attention to the political, strategic, and military dimensions of small and local wars and insurgencies and conversely activated an interest in the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, as well as a focus of attention on Western powers' performances in the wars in Algeria, Malaya, Vietnam, the Falklands, and Lebanon.[107] The war has also proved that small wars and insurgencies are the more immediate threat to Russia's security interests in the foreseeable future and that the country needs to reconsider and reform its military and security policy accordingly.[108] The war also highlighted the

poor planning and military blunders characterized by Russian setbacks at the beginning of the war.[109]

The scale of combat operations as well as the poor coordination of arms—infantry, armor, artillery, and air power—during the war has led military theorists to the conclusion that there is an urgent need to reconsider the theory and practical implications of engaging in special operations as the way to fight secessionist wars and insurgencies.[110] In addition, some Russian analysts argue that the Chechen War has gone beyond the classic definition of "small scale war" or "low intensity conflict"; rather, they claim that secessionist wars, which threaten vital national security interests, could in future employ some elements of total war.[111] Use of force, they are convinced, should follow a "Russian version" of the Weinberger Doctrine—with operations undertaken only where clearly defined national security interests are at stake, when strong political support exists at home, and where force is applied exercised decisively, with all means applied to ensure the total victory.

MILITARY LESSONS

Experience in Chechnya suggested the need for the introduction of a new command concept for special operations and the creation of joint operational groups, to comprise of a mix of troops and forces from several ministries and governmental agencies operating according to a clear chain of command.[112] Moreover, command and control over the special operation should be placed under the direct supervision of the General Staff of Russian Armed Forces.[113] In addition the reorganization of troops involved in special operations must include the strengthening of the leading role of ground forces within joint operation groups, the improvement of the tactical independence of combat units with coordinated artillery, air, and helicopter support to be assigned directly to them.[114] The war in Chechnya also stressed the need to create in peacetime formations in permanent readiness consisting of combined, mobile units reinforced with artillery and armor, able to engage quickly and decisively in local conflict.[115]

A number of other lessons emerged from the conflict in Chechnya. Experience in counterinsurgency suggested the need for the special training of troops involved in antiguerrilla warfare, with special armor provided for such troops, as well as the critical importance of isolating the theater of the campaign.[116] Some Russian analysts argue that the war in Chechnya has proved the great usefulness of close and massive artillery support as well as the need to diversify it with the creation of "fire bases" and the employment of "fire ambushes" and "fire sieges," Russian terms for the expanded use of artillery.[117] In this connection the Russian military

tried to learn from its Chechen experience as well as from that of the Americans in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf. Russian military writers have admitted generally that the army had lost the information and propaganda war in Chechnya and stressed the need to disrupt the insurgents' local command system and broadly to employ nonlethal weapons.[118] The war was also a testing ground for Russian armor; tanks and armored vehicles appeared to be extremely vulnerable in urban combat. At the same time, some observers found that the use of artillery, self-propelled howitzers, and MLRS including those employed by the Chechens proved rather effective. It is clear that the development of new self-propelled howitzers has been directly affected by the urban combat experience during the Chechen War.[119] The fierce battle on the streets of Grozny stressed, also, the growing value of the antitank grenade launcher in urban combat.[120] While most of these changes, suggested after the war, are still awaiting implementation, their potential impact on the Russian military could be significant. One could argue that the First Chechen War began the process of transforming the remains of the Soviet army into that of the Russian Confederation.

Russian military analysts make a sound point when they stress that the main Russian blunder in the war was the misapplication of the country's military power and the misuse of troops.[121] Due to the deep crisis within the military as well as the still powerful ambitions of a nuclear superpower and its military priorities, the Russian army found itself at war with Soviet-era weapons in poor conditions, and with critically undertrained, under-paid, and under-manned troops. Stressing this point Ralph Peters concluded: "They were forced to use what they had, and what they had was wrong. Equipment designed for war in the European countryside, flawed tactics and grossly inadequate training and command and control led to disaster."[122]

During the First Chechen War civil-military relations in Russia underwent considerable transformation. On the one hand, some Russian military observers, reluctantly admitting defeat, argue that the army had been denied permission to win by civilian authorities and "bad" press.[123] On the other hand, "the Kremlin's spectacular inability to formulate a clear political strategy in the war led to the disorientation and demoralization of the military, and propelled the intervention by General Lebed" to end the war despite the failure of the politicians.[124]

In the course of the second war in Chechnya, 1999–2009, some transformations in the Russian military performance were already in place. The Russian High Command restricted media activity during the war, recognizing that "the propaganda battle is nearly as important as the fighting itself."[125] The Russians also used air, missile, and artillery strikes in a more effective, coordinated, and destructive way than they did during the first war.[126] Today, the Russian military demonstrates a new

sensitivity to own losses. In addition, the coordination of services is considerably improved with a strong role played of the General Staff. Thus, changes in tactics are significant. At the same time, this "one big military experiment" in Chechnya, as Theodore Karasik called it,[127] has witnessed Russia's failure to radically modernize the army. Despite the changes in tactics the military leadership is still wedded to the Soviet strategic tradition of fighting major conventional campaigns.

The most significant contribution of the Chechen War was the lessons to be derived from urban combat and all its consequences on strategy and tactics, weaponry, training, and the organization of troops.[128]

The Chechens' dogged resistance to the technologically and numerically superior Russian army also stimulated the further development of the concept of territorial defense in some Central European countries, where coordinated and diverse efforts exerted by the whole of the population are meant to render the cost of military aggression extremely high to an invader.[129] For example, the small military establishments of the Baltic states are modernizing this concept in the light of the Chechen experience, turning to the idea of "total defense," a concept that presumes active and passive resistance across the country in the event of attack.[130]

The international dimension of the First Chechen War, in which the Chechen cause enjoyed the active external support of the large Chechen diaspora in Moscow, Turkey, and Arab countries, as well as from some transnational Islamic organizations, revealed the future role of nonstate associations and transnational actors as possible participants in future conflicts.[131] The Russian military as well as the public paid a great deal of attention to the cultural and religious side of the Chechen War, often regarding it as a struggle between Orthodox Christianity and Islamic jihad.[132] Official Chechen sources described the war as "brutal military aggression of great powers against small ones under the cover of international law," pointing to the West's noninterference in the conflict.[133]

Developing this theme, the Pakistani military analyst Brigadier (Ret.) Syed A. I. Tirmazi noted: "The 1994–1996 Russia-Chechnya war was not only the result of the Russian-Chechen conflict, but also of the conflict between the Chechens and the Western world."[134] The pattern of intercultural conflict revealed by the Chechen War, as Ralph Peters noted, remains "the great nightmare" of the new century.[135] The significant cultural differences between the Russians and the Chechens influenced to a great extent their performance on the battlefield. It also should be noted that, thanks to Russification, the Chechens successfully exploited their intimate knowledge of Russian weaknesses and vulnerabilities during the war. Inexperienced and unfamiliar with the local culture, Russian military commanders adapted a police action into an old-fashioned Algeria-type colonial war—and failed.

The cultural dimension of the Chechen War contributed considerably to the development of the Chechen way of war, which as Major Raymond Finch noted: "cares nothing for war's formal rules and is prepared to use any strategy to further [its] objectives."[136] This highlights the Chechen culture of warfare as well as to almost any other determined opponent pitted against an overwhelming, technologically advanced military in an asymmetric context. These methods may be termed "military terrorism" and the "civilianization" of warfare.

The regional wars of the second half of the twentieth century increasingly affected civilians. The Chechen War, where over 90 percent of all casualties were suffered by civilians, is indicative of this trend. In contrast, the "civilianization" of war has meant an active use of noncombatants as a tool and nontraditional weapon in order to demoralize the enemy as well as to transform strategy and tactics. For example, large-scale and orchestrated civilian protests at the beginning of the operation in Chechnya led to the destruction of the Russians' initial military plan. Chechen fighters also used civilians, including refugees, both as cover during guerrilla operations and as a propaganda tool in the information war. The Russian army was unable to meet such a challenge, and in addition to other failures and mistakes the incapacity of the Russian military to meet and respond adequately to the challenge of an intercultural contest and the Chechens' asymmetric strategy stand as important elements in any explanation of the causes of the Russian defeat.

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CHAPTER 13

Culture and Complexity: Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2003–11

William A. Taylor

Contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq relates to classic counterinsurgency theory in some fundamental ways such as its political character, the importance of ideas, and the value of winning hearts and minds. It also presents many complexities due to the unique context and culture of Iraqi society. The ambitious—and sometimes ambiguous—goals for coalition forces in Iraq complicated the situation and made contemporary counterinsurgency there difficult. In particular, the political goal of regime change combined with an imbalance between military preparation and postconflict planning to produce a power vacuum following the conventional campaign. Early coalition counterinsurgency efforts such as de-Ba'athification, search-and-destroy missions, and the use of forward operating bases (FOBs) transitioned slowly to a policy of "clear, hold, build" and the deployment of coalition forces among local Iraqi populations. The Sunni Awakening, the Petraeus Doctrine, and the subsequent surge all improved contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq. Throughout the experience, coalition forces learned valuable lessons, although the degree to which these conclusions are applicable outside of Iraq remains debated.

There are many valuable principles one can glean from classic counterinsurgency theory. Andrew Mumford points out that "There are indeed some counter-insurgency truths that need to be held as self-evident." Many scholars and practitioners of contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq relate it to the Vietnam War. Bruce Hoffman, who served as a senior

advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, remarks that "Vietnam and Iraq thus form two legs of a historically fraught triangle—with America's experiences in El Salvador in the 1980s providing the connecting leg." Andrew Bacevich reminds readers that some counterinsurgency advocates even compared Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez to General William Westmoreland and General David Petraeus to General Creighton Abrams. Others urge caution with comparing contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq with previous experience in Vietnam. Kenneth Pollack and Irena Sargsyan note that "the Vietnam analogy . . . rarely fits with Iraq."[1]

Contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq shares certain key characteristics with classic counterinsurgency theory. The first is that counterinsurgency is fundamentally and inescapably political in character. This is especially true regarding goals. Andrew Mumford connects this dynamic to Sir Robert Thompson's work, cautioning readers that "the need for a clear political aim (perhaps the most pertinent of the principles) is not an exclusively anti-Maoist strategic goal." Other prominent scholars add additional features. Paul Cornish emphasizes the importance of patience in counterinsurgency, linking it to public opinion. This trait is especially relevant in Iraq since forbearance arguably runs counter to demonstrated precedents in American strategic culture that favor quick, decisive, and clear-cut victories in large-scale conflicts. Kalev Sepp highlights the local nature of counterinsurgency, arguing that "They are not a single war, but a hundred different wars, each unique to its valley, village, district or neighbourhood." Good intelligence, especially human intelligence, is also critical for effective counterinsurgency. Bruce Hoffman applies this tenet to Iraq, noting that it is necessary for ascertaining "basic criteria" such as the types of insurgents and the strength of their organizations. Another shared trait is that counterinsurgency is not exclusively a military activity. Stuart Griffin captures this constant nicely: "One of the most important common features of the works of the prominent scholar-practitioners acknowledged within [counterinsurgency]—notably, Kitson, Thompson, Galula, Smith, Nagl and Kilcullen—is the emphasis they place upon the comprehensive, multidimensional nature of counterinsurgency: success is almost *never* defined solely by the physical defeat of the insurgent."[2]

A foundational component of classic counterinsurgency theory is the value of ideas. Paul Cornish develops the concept of a "narrative," which he defines as "a statement of identity, cause and intent around which government, people and armed forces (and perhaps even some allies) can unite." The centrality of ideas within counterinsurgency is often referred to as winning hearts and minds. For some coalition forces in Iraq, especially certain segments of the U.S. military, this approach meant turning away from traditional areas of emphasis such as conventional warfare.

Kalev Sepp questions why such a reorientation took so long to occur in Iraq. Other scholars relate winning hearts and minds to political legitimacy. Andrea Lopez argues that counterinsurgency efforts must enable the local government to achieve political legitimacy in the eyes of the population and must also provide incentives for the local population to become participants in that government. While acknowledging the importance of winning hearts and minds, David Petraeus stresses the usefulness of increasing the number of stakeholders in the resulting political structure: "More important [than winning hearts and minds] was the idea of Iraqis wanting the new Iraq to succeed."[3]

While sharing some fundamental characteristics with classic counterinsurgency theory, contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq also represented a new and more complex version of insurgency. This reality should not have come as a complete surprise to policymakers. Iraqi society is notoriously fractured with ethnicity, religion, and tribal affiliation, all providing stronger cultural affinities than Western concepts such as nationalism. The coalition goal of regime change meant completely overturning the entire system that had been in place for 35 years. The Ba'ath Party ascended to power in Iraq in July 1968. Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq as president from July 1979 to April 2003. In addition to the longevity of Ba'ath political rule, the complex demographics of Iraq made counterinsurgency there difficult. The Iraqi population numbers more than 31 million people, divided between three main ethnic groups: Arabs, Kurds, and Turkomans. Iraq is home to approximately 15.6 million Shi'a Muslims, 8.4 million Sunni Arabs, 6 million Kurds, and 1 million Turkomans. There are recurring Kurdish–Arab disputes in northern Iraq over land, much of it containing lucrative oilfields. Most important, the Sunni Arab minority received special consideration throughout the rule of Saddam Hussein. Geraint Hughes comments that "a significant portion of the Sunni Arab community relied on the survival of Ba'athism for its privileged political and socio-economic position." This complex situation foreshadowed significant discontent for former power brokers once coalition forces overthrew the regime of Saddam Hussein. Even before the invasion of Iraq in 2003, prescient analysts such as Conrad Crane and Andrew Terrill predicted that Iraq would fracture into various tribal divisions after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime.[4]

One factor contributing to the complexity of contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq was that the Iraqi population had differing objectives and was willing to engage in violence to achieve them. Lydia Walker captures this impact: "The division of a nation's population into separate, competing groups complicates the Galulian triad (people, government, insurgents). Also, the 'insurgents' in Iraq are not a monolithic entity." Andrea Lopez estimates the number of parties initially engaged in insurgency in Iraq during 2003 at 25. In addition to the presence of many

insurgent groups, the nature of those factions also diverged. Some of them were local and others were foreign. Some of them were economically motivated and others were ideologically inspired. Lydia Walker portrays the insurgent clusters as forming "independent strands of violence." Contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq therefore struggled with a spectrum of threats, including Sunni extremist groups such as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), Shi'a militias such as *Jaish al-Mahdi* (JAM), and bands that pursued outright criminality.[5]

Initially, the approach of coalition forces to contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq was mismatched with the complexities of Iraqi culture. Although British forces had developed robust counterinsurgency capabilities based on experience, senior U.S. military leaders typically eschewed counterinsurgency following Vietnam, evidenced most clearly by the Weinberger-Powell doctrine. Even so, contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq deviated fundamentally from the context of effective British counterinsurgency efforts in Malaya and Oman. Geraint Hughes notes that "In contrast, the Coalition is fighting adversaries unified by a shared hostility to the occupiers and the post-2005 Iraqi government, but little else." He aptly characterizes the violence in Iraq as multiple insurgencies, each with a unique instigator, distinctive goal, and characteristic methodology.[6]

Compounding the complexity of Iraqi culture were the ambitious goals that the Bush administration set for Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. Maintaining a government through counterinsurgency is difficult enough. Regime change makes counterinsurgency exponentially more challenging. Kalev Sepp characterizes it as a revolution: "Call it militant Wilsonianism, call it expeditionary democracy, call it counterinsurgency, but this is not 'return to status quo,' and it is decidedly not stabilizing. It is an overturning of nations. It is, at its core, a revolution. American soldiers are the instruments of this revolution, and its implementers as well . . . and the US Army in particular must shoulder the burden of these tremendous tasks because there is simply no other agency or department in the US government that can do the job."[7]

While much of the violence in Iraq revolved around securing power, the ways in which this occurred were often different from traditional insurgencies. The insurgents were not primarily concerned with controlling territory, fighting a government in power, or building up their own conventional forces eventually to battle coalition forces. Instead, Kalev Sepp's characterization of insurgents' preferred role as "spoilers" is quite appropriate. Bruce Hoffman reinforces this conclusion by noting that "Unlike a 'classical guerilla-type campaign,' the Iraq insurgency has no center of gravity." The amorphous nature of contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq meant that it lacked many of the traits associated with classic counterinsurgency theory. Bruce Hoffman points out that "Indeed,

none of the four stages of an insurgency defined in the CIA's renowned *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* seem to be relevant to the situation in Iraq."[8]

The tribal structure of Iraqi society compounded these convolutions. Classic counterinsurgency theory focuses on maintaining the backing of the population. While this principle applies to contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq, there were often multiple avenues through which coalition forces accomplished this important task. Tribal leaders in Iraq exhibited manifold priorities that sometimes complemented and occasionally conflicted with the priorities of the coalition and even the Iraqi national government. The Sunni Awakening that publicly emerged in 2006 demonstrated the weight of the tribal structure of Iraqi society and highlighted the additional layer of intricacy that it contributed to contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq.[9]

Both major coalition partners, the United States and the United Kingdom, had ample previous experience in Iraq. The British presence there lasted from 1917 to 1958, while the United States led a successful international coalition against Iraq in 1990–91. This time the coalition raised the stakes significantly. The underlying rationale for the 2003 invasion of Iraq was to remove the Saddam Hussein regime completely from power. U.S. policymakers also created a heightened sense of urgency based on disputed claims regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program. As a result, the Iraq War was politically contentious from the start. On March 17, 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush announced specific goals for Operation *Iraqi Freedom* and issued a 48-hour ultimatum to Saddam Hussein. The stated short-term goals were to remove the Saddam Hussein regime and to secure Iraq's WMD programs. The avowed long-term aspiration was to ensure the emergence of "a new Iraq that is prosperous and free."[10]

Coalition forces commenced a "Shock and Awe" aerial bombardment campaign on March 19, 2003. Coalition forces then invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003. The U.S. military labeled the invasion Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (OIF), while UK forces named it Operation *TELIC*. Coalition forces included the United States and its strongest partner, the United Kingdom, as well as contributions from Georgia, Poland, South Korea, Australia, Romania, Estonia, El Salvador, and others. The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland all provided combat troops. U.S. Army Lieutenant General David McKiernan commanded the overall coalition ground campaign that drove north from Kuwait toward Baghdad. McKiernan's advance consisted of U.S. Army Lieutenant General William Wallace's V Corps on the western approach and U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant General James Conway's I Marine Expeditionary Force on the eastern line of attack. The UK First Armored Division occupied Basra. The conventional military campaign took only three weeks and

culminated with the fall of Baghdad on April 9, 2003. By early April, coalition forces had overthrown Saddam Hussein's regime, and on May 1, U.S. President Bush declared "Mission Accomplished" and proclaimed the cessation of major combat operations in Iraq.[11]

This rapid military exploit underscored the disparity in planning for the conventional conflict and what was to follow. OIF represented extensive military organization and a virtual absence of postconflict preparation. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld heavily influenced the military planning, emphasizing high speed and a small presence that were the hallmarks of his defense transformation initiative. In stark contrast to the detailed provision for the conventional military campaign, coalition leaders exhibited a fundamental lack of forecasting the realities that would necessarily accompany regime change. Bruce Hoffman characterizes the result: "Thus a critical window of opportunity was lost because of the failure to anticipate the widespread civil disorders and looting that followed the capture of Baghdad."[12]

The quick conclusion of the conventional military campaign occasioned the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime and produced a corresponding power vacuum. Coalition forces were inadequate to provide the requisite security that such a situation demanded. The United States initially deployed approximately 115,000 personnel and the United Kingdom contributed roughly 46,000 soldiers, combining for the majority of coalition forces. Geraint Hughes emphasizes the impact of such minimal numbers in a country with both a large population and vast territorial boundaries: "As a direct consequence of the Bush administration's neglect of postconflict reconstruction and security—and the restrictions the Pentagon placed on military planners preparing for the invasion of Iraq—the number of US troops involved in OIF was reduced to a bare minimum. The consequences of this planning decision cannot be underestimated."[13]

The formal occupation that followed during 2003–04 encountered a complex insurgency that continually worsened until 2006. Geraint Hughes brands the period between 2004 and 2006 as "a low-level sectarian civil war" that kept Iraq "in a fragile condition" until at least 2010. From the beginning, coalition forces found themselves conducting contemporary counterinsurgency operations in Iraq simultaneous with those in Afghanistan.[14]

Immediately after the invasion, a host of political issues arose that had profound consequences for contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq. The Bush administration initially planned for Iraqi exiles to play a prominent role, with Ahmed Chalabi and the Iraqi National Congress being the most influential. Even so, the Bush administration dedicated little time, personnel, and strategic guidance to plan the postinvasion strategy prior to March 2003. U.S. President Bush created the Organization for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) on January 20,

2003, with National Security Presidential Directive 24. Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Jay Garner headed the organization. Garner and his meager staff started work in Baghdad in late April 2003. ORHA operated from April 18 until May 2003. President Bush's "Special Envoy for Free Iraqis" Zalmay Khalilzad also held summits to discuss political goals for Iraq on both April 15 and 28, 2003.[15]

The lack of substantial efforts to institute political institutions had far-reaching results. After the invasion by coalition forces, there was a complete breakdown of stability throughout much of Iraq. Regime change by definition creates a political void, which, if left unfilled, can result in chaos. Such was the result in Iraq. In April 2003 there was widespread lawlessness in Iraq, most notably the looting of the Iraq National Museum and the Iraq National Library. Andrew Mumford illuminates the consequences: "The lack of law and order, as a result of American political failure to plan for the immediate aftermath of the invasion, sent two powerful messages: that the coalition was either powerless or unwilling to halt violence, and that it therefore could not protect the wider Iraqi population."[16]

In an effort to broaden the political and development efforts that ORHA had begun, U.S. President Bush established the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and appointed U.S. Ambassador L. Paul Bremer as the new organization's director in May 2003. Bremer and his staff started work in the Green Zone located in Baghdad on May 9, 2003. Before the end of the month, the CPA made two significant political changes that would influence the situation in Iraq dramatically. With Order Number One, Bremer embarked on a de-Ba'athification program. The edict sought to eliminate the Ba'ath political party in Iraq, removing upwards of 30,000 former Ba'ath leaders from current and presumably any future political power. With Order Number Two, Bremer disbanded the Iraqi military on May 23, 2003. With this pivotal move, Bremer decimated the economic and social prospects of approximately 300,000 trained soldiers and officers. Geraint Hughes remarks that "It is therefore no surprise that humiliated and impoverished ex-officers provided the core of initial insurgent activity against the Coalition." The political emphasis on de-Ba'athification also shaped early military efforts. The U.S. military sought out Ba'ath leaders throughout 2003, the most notable example being the capture of Saddam Hussein in December of that year.[17]

In addition to de-Ba'athification, there were other early coalition political and development efforts. One example was the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP). The CPA established CERP initially with captured Iraqi money. The initiative funded small projects that coalition commanders carried out at the local level. CERP funded numerous road, school, water, and small business projects benefiting many Iraqi villages. After the early success of CERP, the U.S. Congress appropriated

additional money specifically for the program. Over time, coalition reconstruction efforts increased considerably, reaching approximately $3 billion in CERP and another $50 billion in general reconstruction projects.[18]

Early coalition political efforts shifted toward a transfer of political power from the coalition to the government of Iraq. The CPA implemented this transfer to Iyad Allawi's interim government on June 28, 2004, thereby dissolving its own original mandate. From June 2004 to September 2006, the coalition set about the arduous task of reconstituting the Iraqi military. Coalition focus then concentrated on improving the capacity of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). To this end, the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) worked closely with Iraqi institutions such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Interior, and the Counter-Terrorism Bureau.[19]

Many observers criticize early coalition political efforts as ill-advised and inadequate. The Bush administration's detailed military planning for the invasion of Iraq underscores the paltry provision for the postconflict political situation. Ensuring political stability is crucial to any counterinsurgency effort. In Iraq, this necessity was even more critical, given the explicit goal of removing the Saddam Hussein regime completely from power. An absence of power was not only possible, but was actually foreseeable. More attention should have been paid to what exactly would fill this void and how. Andrew Mumford observes that the lack of clearly defined political goals, the dearth of opportunities for Iraqis to participate in the legitimate political process, and the resulting negative Iraqi public perceptions regarding early coalition political efforts fueled the insurgency: "The political vacuum left in the wake of coalition indecisiveness was filled by a combination of radical clerics such as Muqtada al-Sadr and foreign jihadi leaders like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi."[20]

The initial division of coalition responsibilities tasked the CPA with political and development efforts and Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) with security duties. The coalition created CJTF-7 on June 15, 2003, and appointed the American military commander in Iraq, U.S. Army Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, as its commanding general. CJTF-7, which included a UK deputy commanding general, led coalition counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq. By July 2003, coalition military leaders including Sanchez and the new Central Command (CENTCOM) commander U.S. Army General John Abizaid characterized Iraq as an insurgency. Violence in Iraq increased dramatically in 2003. During that summer, five attacks on coalition forces per day were common. By the fall of 2003, the number of attacks on coalition forces per day was approaching 40, an increase of eightfold.[21]

Early coalition counterinsurgency efforts during the fall of 2003 included search-and-destroy missions and an increased use of FOBs.

Colin Kahl depicts the initial approach of search-and-destroy missions as "heavy-handed" and focusing predominately on kinetic operations at the expense of nonkinetic operations. The tactic garnered attention, such as the dramatic capture of Saddam Hussein on December 13, 2003, near his hometown of Tikrit. Concurrently, the increased use of FOBs aimed at limiting coalition casualties and avoiding the provocation of the Iraqi populace. While well-intentioned, the method had negative consequences. Andrea Lopez discerns that the FOB tactic turned classic counterinsurgency theory on its head: "The withdrawal of Americans from the cities, coupled with an increase in the use of violence, separated the counterinsurgents from the population. To win a counterinsurgency the government and its allies must do the opposite: they must separate the guerillas from the population." Early counterinsurgency efforts also included tasking coalition military forces with significant development responsibilities. Examples included Task Force Restore Iraqi Electricity, Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil, and the CERP.[22]

Two significant challenges to contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq emerged during 2003: the Abu Ghraib prison scandal and the increased use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by insurgents. The Abu Ghraib prison scandal surfaced in late 2003 with revelations regarding U.S. military personnel abusing Iraqi prisoners through a variety of culturally inflammatory means. In conjunction with revelations regarding coalition involvement in rendition and waterboarding, the scandals tarnished the reputation of early coalition counterinsurgency efforts. Andrew Mumford concludes that the incident "starkly highlighted the imperative of moral and legal probity as an essential counter-insurgency tool." By April 2004, the widespread dissemination of photographs confirming the graphic abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison by U.S. soldiers outraged many around the world and severely damaged initial coalition counterinsurgency efforts.[23]

The increased use of IEDs by insurgents also plagued coalition efforts in Iraq from the start. The devices were technologically simple yet highly lethal. Their use by insurgents was highly prevalent in Iraq. The U.S. Congressional Research Service categorized IEDs as "the enemy's 'weapon of choice' in Iraq." Paul Cornish notes that the pervasiveness of IEDs—along with insurgents' increasing use of the internet for information operations—illustrates the ability of insurgents to use technology successfully and demonstrates "the danger of assuming insurgents to be technological primitives, armed with nothing more than small arms and hand grenades."[24]

During the spring of 2004, CJTF-7 became Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I). Ricardo Sanchez continued as the commanding general and the headquarters remained in Baghdad. It was at this time that violence in Iraq increased intensely. Bing West portrays this period of time as

"a Two-Front War" between al-Anbar in the west and Baghdad in the east that resulted in the majority of coalition deaths between 2004 and 2006. He remarks that "by mid-2006, the coalition was losing on both fronts." Indicative of this difficult time were the battles of Ramadi and Fallujah. Ramadi was a devastating campaign that began in April 2004 when former Iraqi soldiers launched an insurgency there. It reignited 30 months later in June 2006. The battle of Fallujah began on March 31, 2004, when insurgents killed four private military contractors working for Blackwater and publicly displayed their burned bodies. Fallujah is a city located in al-Anbar province with a population of approximately 300,000. In Fallujah, I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) commenced Operation *Vigilant Resolve* during April and Operation *Phantom Fury* began in November 2004. Coalition forces, including British, Iraqi, and U.S. marine and army units, controlled Fallujah by the end of November 2004. Ultimately these early coalition counterinsurgency efforts illustrated that the "clear, hold, build" counterinsurgency stratagem worked after November 2004.[25]

A critical campaign in the contemporary counterinsurgency effort in Iraq was Tal Afar. Located in Ninewah Province with a population of approximately 200,000, Tal Afar was a significant early challenge for coalition forces. Violence was on the rise in early 2005. In May of that year coalition leaders assigned U.S. Army Colonel H. R. McMaster, commanding officer of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, and his unit to Tal Afar. Setting an example for future coalition efforts, McMaster began preparing both himself and his soldiers immediately upon receiving his assignment. In many ways, McMaster was uniquely primed for the counterinsurgency mission. He had written a widely read book on Vietnam, had been director of the Commander's Action Group at CENTCOM, and quickly instituted an innovative approach to predeployment training by enhancing the preparation for counterinsurgency to include culture and language training. Kalev Sepp reminds readers that McMaster's approach was "a long and comprehensive intellectual preparation of his troops for this kind of war, not just tactical training."[26]

McMaster's approach paid dividends once his unit arrived in Tal Afar. The Third Armored Cavalry Regiment emphasized protecting the local population. It accomplished this through increased security measures, including a dirt berm surrounding the city and checkpoints for anyone wishing to enter or exit the city. McMaster's unit also increased partnerships with Iraqi military and police units using outposts situated among the local population rather than segregated away from them. For example, coalition forces worked closely with the 3rd Iraqi Army Division in Tal Afar. By September 2005, coalition forces and their Iraqi allies had conducted a successful counterinsurgency effort and as a result controlled Tal Afar. To many observers, the campaign represented an early example of the successful application of a "clear, hold, build" counterinsurgency

approach in Iraq. This conclusion was amplified by significant press coverage of coalition efforts in Tal Afar, the most prominent example being Tom Ricks's series on the campaign published in the *Washington Post* during 2005. Tal Afar offered an early glimpse of how to conduct successfully contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq.[27]

Another critical campaign for coalition forces was Basra. The British Army was deployed to Iraq's southeastern provinces from 2003 to 2009. One of the main cities within this area was Basra, a densely populated port city close to numerous oilfields. British forces took a nuanced approach to counterinsurgency in Basra. They eschewed harsh tactics. They wore berets instead of helmets, avoided strict regulations such as checkpoints and curfews, and worked closely with local leaders. Following the conclusion of the conventional campaign, British leaders quickly reduced their forces in Iraq. British numbers fell from approximately 46,000 in May 2003 to just over 10,000 only three months later. At the same time, British efforts helped to establish nearly 1,000 Iraqi police. The dearth of civilian training, adequate personnel, and available funding all led to an overall lack of progress. David Ucko characterizes the situation in dire terms: "Meanwhile garbage piled up, electricity outages were frequent and problems with sewage and water caused an outbreak of cholera. These problems, and the looting, turned the population against the occupying forces."[28]

Two groups challenged British personnel in Basra: the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, with its militia the Badr Bridgade, and JAM, also known as the Mahdi Army. The Mahdi Army engaged British forces from 2003 to 2004. The CPA ordered the arrest of the group's leader, Shi'a cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, and al-Sadr began an insurgency in April 2004. At that time, the Mahdi Army attacked coalition forces in Nasiriyah and then assaulted coalition forces in Amarah in August 2004. Fighting erupted in Sadr City and beginning in mid-2005, violence in Basra spiked. These two insurgent factions vied for control of Basra. David Ucko articulates why: "The militias competed over three main assets: access to public institutions; control over security forces; and control and trafficking of oil."[29]

From October 2005 to May 2006, a rift developed between the provincial council and British forces. At issue was the arrest and handling of Iraqi prisoners by British soldiers. The tensions led to increased violence by the militias in the area. In 2006, British leaders augmented the civilian resources in Basra. The British government created the UK Stabilisation Unit and a provincial reconstruction team. The British military launched Operation *Sinbad* in September 2006. The operation was a five-month campaign aimed at reestablishing control of Basra. While praising the operation's "comprehensive" nature, David Ucko admits that "the results were disheartening."[30]

In August 2007, Sadr called for a halt to JAM attacks on coalition troops by declaring a temporary cease-fire. The following month, September 2007, British forces withdrew from Basra. On December 16, 2007, provincial Iraqi control was achieved. On March 25, 2008, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki ordered the Iraqi Army to attack JAM in Basra in an operation code-named the "Charge of the Knights." After the operation, 20,000 Iraqi army troops occupied Basra and its important port. This move denied the militias control of the lucrative customs revenue that Basra's port generated. On March 31, 2009, UK Royal Marines Major General Andy Salmon transferred command of the Multi-National Division (South-East) to U.S. Army Major General Michael Oates. The name of the command also changed to Multi-National Division (South).[31]

A critical event related to contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq occurred on February 22, 2006. On that day, Sunni insurgents bombed the al-Askari shrine (Golden Mosque) in Samarra. The Golden Mosque was a significant Shi'a holy place. The event marked the possible start of a civil war between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims in Iraq. The bombing of the Golden Mosque immediately triggered sectarian violence that increased throughout 2006, marking the high-point of violence in Iraq.[32]

A pivotal episode in contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq was the Sunni Awakening. The movement was known alternatively as the Sunni Awakening, the Awakening Movement, or the Anbar Awakening. Sheikh Abd al Sittar Abu Reesha led the Sunni Awakening. The movement began slowly in 2005 and then became public in September 2006. The Sunni Awakening occurred mainly in al-Anbar, a western province of Iraq that had experienced high levels of insurgent attacks up to and including 2006. Observers paint the situation in al-Anbar during the summer of 2006 in ominous hues. Geraint Hughes characterizes the province at that time as "highly vulnerable to a complete insurgent takeover," while John McCary echoes these sentiments: "By 2006, al Qaeda had become nearly unstoppable as both a political and tactical force in the region, and the U.S. military unofficially declared al Anbar politically and militarily 'lost.'"[33]

The precarious position for coalition forces in al-Anbar that existed until 2006 resulted partly because Sunni Muslims and AQI both saw coalition forces as the primary threat to their own power and therefore actively sought to undermine coalition efforts in the province. John McCary describes this dynamic as a "marriage of convenience" between Sunni Muslims and al-Qaeda operatives in the province and illuminates two main factors that eventually undermined this initial accord and triggered the subsequent awakening. First, Sunni leaders began to see al-Qaeda as more of a menace than coalition forces. Second, coalition forces adapted their counterinsurgency tactics in the province. What emerged was the Sunni Awakening. The movement pitted Sunni Muslims in al-Anbar

against AQI and increased cooperation between Sunni Muslims and coalition forces in the province. Estimates of the number of Sunnis who participated in the awakening range from 70,000 to 100,000. These Sunnis increasingly collaborated with coalition forces in al-Anbar, primarily the Multi-National Force-West (MNF-W), consisting of approximately 22,000 U.S. marines and 5,000 U.S. Army soldiers.[34]

Two groups sought alliances with coalition forces during the movement: The Anbar Salvation Council led by Fasal al-Gaoud and the Awakening led by Abd al Sittar. In September 2006, Abd al Sittar publicly announced what Bing West describes as "a tribal rebellion against Al-Qaeda" and made known the Awakening's intention to work closely with coalition forces in al-Anbar, led by U.S. Army Colonel Sean McFarland. In response, al-Qaeda announced on October 15, 2006, that al-Anbar, along with other provinces, was now the Islamic State of Iraq. Al-Qaeda operatives killed al-Gaoud on June 25, 2007, and Abd al Sittar on September 13, 2007. Abd al Sittar's brother, Ahmed Abu Reesha, assumed the leadership of the Awakening movement following his brother's death. The resilience of the Sunni population in light of al-Qaeda attacks underpinned the Awakening. Bing West portrays their "change of sentiment" as "the dominant variable" enabling the awakening to take root and grow.[35]

Coalition forces also played an important role in the Sunni Awakening by transforming their counterinsurgency tactics. U.S. Army Colonel Sean MacFarland was the coalition officer in charge of Ramadi, the capital of al-Anbar. He worked closely with local sheikhs, especially with their militias. Coalition forces also made changes in their approach to economic development. One specific example was the shift away from strict competition for contracts to a patronage approach, which resonated more strongly within Iraqi culture. John McCary notes the benefits of the patronage system: "By paying the sheikhs directly and allowing them to distribute the money as they saw fit, tribal leaders were able to regain their legitimacy and demand the fealty of their tribesmen as they had done in the past." U.S. Marine Corps Brigadier General John Allen also instituted novel methods, such as opening dialogue with exiled sheikhs from al-Anbar and imploring them to return to the province in leadership positions. Many of the exiled sheikhs did just that. The adjustments in counterinsurgency tactics that coalition forces made in al-Anbar reinforced the importance of conducting counterinsurgency through means rooted in local culture.[36]

The results of the Sunni Awakening were significant for contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq. In al-Anbar, al-Qaeda in Iraq increasingly usurped the power of local sheikhs, eventually causing them to reconsider their resistance to coalition efforts in the province. Prescient coalition military leaders seized upon this shift and adapted their counterinsurgency tactics to reinforce it. The Awakening converted many

Sunnis in al-Anbar from their previous roles as insurgents to partners with both coalition forces and the fledgling Iraqi government against al-Qaeda. Violence in al-Anbar dropped precipitously after the Sunni Awakening. This was partly the result of fewer Sunni insurgent attacks and greater cooperation from Sunnis regarding coalition efforts, especially local assistance identifying al-Qaeda insurgents in the province. Once the sheikhs decided to ally with coalition forces and the Iraqi government, they proved instrumental in providing actionable intelligence on al-Qaeda insurgents.[37]

The Sunni Awakening also demonstrated the complex nature of contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq. The driving force behind the awakening was the strength of tribal affiliations within Iraqi society. In al-Anbar, the most powerful tribe was the Dulaym tribe. Al-Qaeda provocations threatened to undermine the traditional tribal structure in the province. In response, coalition counterinsurgency efforts reinforced the traditional tribal structure rather than working against it. As a result, the Sunni Awakening provided coalition forces with fewer insurgents, more allies, and stronger capabilities in what had been an area plagued by violence only a short while before.[38]

An important outgrowth of the Sunni Awakening was the Sons of Iraq movement. This movement sought to extend the successful results achieved in al-Anbar to other areas in Iraq. The Sons of Iraq movement used Iraqi militias, most of whom were Sunni Arabs, to combat al-Qaeda. Coalition forces provided weapons and money to the militias and coordinated with them closely. Beginning on October 1, 2008, the Iraqi government increased its oversight of the Sons of Iraq movement and by April 2009 established more control over it.[39]

Inextricably linked to contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq is what has been termed the Petraeus Doctrine. Petraeus commanded the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq, then commanded the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq and the NATO Training Mission–Iraq. In October 2005, he took command of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Petraeus earned a doctorate from Princeton University and wrote an influential dissertation entitled "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam." Petraeus's sway on the U.S. Army steadily grew during the 2000s. Andrew Bacevich compares Petraeus's contemporary status with that held by the iconic U.S. Army General Colin Powell during the 1990s.[40]

Distilled to its essence, the Petraeus Doctrine relates international instability to U.S. national security, which in turn relates to counterinsurgency. Lydia Walker defines it as the view "that violent instability abroad threatens U.S. security and must be squelched through the strategy of counterinsurgency." Andrew Bacevich emphasizes that the doctrine extends this correlation into the future as well. According to him, the Petraeus

doctrine envisions that upcoming warfare "will be protracted, ambiguous, and continuous—with the application of force becoming a lesser part of the soldier's repertoire."[41]

Petraeus is not the lone supporter of this view and its bold implications. A group of supporters, growing in both size and influence throughout the 2000s, subscribed to the Petraeus Doctrine. One of the most prominent is John Nagl. He is a West Point graduate, Rhodes Scholar who earned a degree from Oxford University, and retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel. In 2002, Nagl published a highly influential book entitled *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*. Nagl also served in Iraq as a battalion operations officer. Other prominent supporters of the Petraeus Doctrine include H. R. McMaster and Kalev Sepp.[42]

In many ways, the emergence of the Petraeus Doctrine represents an institutional debate within the U.S. Army regarding the nature of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and its relevance to both future conflict and the U.S. Army as an organization. Andrew Bacevich characterizes the contest as a grassroots movement driven predominately by lieutenant colonels and colonels in which "fresh ideas are coming from the bottom up." He divides the two opposing groups into "Crusaders" who subscribe to the Petraeus Doctrine and "Conservatives" who are wary of it. To supporters of the Petraeus Doctrine, stability has become the pivotal variable in the international security environment. Some observers throughout the U.S. Army (and beyond) are not convinced. They argue that counterinsurgency in Iraq is a unique phenomenon and is not indicative of forthcoming warfare. Colonel Gian Gentile is one such prominent critic. Gentile graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, earned a doctorate in history from Stanford University, and teaches at West Point. He also served two tours of duty in Iraq, one as a squadron commander. In his recent book, Gentile cautions against an exclusive focus on counterinsurgency based on the experience in Iraq due to the opportunity costs in conventional capability that such an approach might entail. The resulting dispute garnered widespread attention well beyond the ranks of the U.S. Army.[43]

The deliberation concerning the Petraeus Doctrine was not merely theoretical. The ineffectiveness of early coalition counterinsurgency efforts triggered a far-reaching reevaluation of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, ultimately leading to the publication of a completely new and highly influential publication, Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. The U.S. military paid scant attention to counterinsurgency prior to OIF. One exception was the U.S. Marine Corps' *Small Wars Manual* that was originally published in 1940 but was reprinted in 1987 and again in 2004, the latter time with an addendum.[44]

A previous review of U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine had been conducted and the results published in October 2004. Not satisfied with

the outcome, U.S. Army Lieutenant General David Petraeus and U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant General James Mattis launched a new evaluation in 2005. In November 2005, the Bush administration published *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*, which articulated an increased emphasis on the "clear, hold, build" strategy that had been successfully implemented in Tal Afar.[45]

Fort Leavenworth hosted a conference in February 2006 where both military and civilian leaders examined the draft counterinsurgency manual and considered input from a variety of sources, many of whom were outside the traditional military hierarchy. The result of months of careful consideration and intensive revisions was the publication on December 15, 2006, of the U.S. Army/Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, most commonly referred to by its U.S. Army designation, Field Manual 3-24 or FM 3-24.[46]

Military doctrine usually does not garner much excitement outside the military. It sometimes does not even generate any inside the military. FM 3-24 was different. Its initial reception was sensational. Interested readers downloaded the manual approximately 1.5 million times in just its first month of availability. In 2007, the University of Chicago Press published the field manual in book form. FM 3-24 received high-level attention in government circles and, more surprisingly, in the civilian press. Bing West recounts that "It was the only FM ever accorded a *New York Times* book review, written by a Harvard professor."[47]

FM 3-24 updated previous counterinsurgency theory such as the CIA's *1987 Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*, sometimes referred to as the *1987 Guide*. Most important, FM 3-24 shifted the emphasis from the territorial control that the *1987 Guide* previously advocated to political control. As a result, FM 3-24 refocused U.S. military doctrine on the political nature of counterinsurgency. In addition, FM 3-24 drew heavily from the influential work of David Galula. He was a French military officer and counterinsurgency theorist who had served in both Indochina and Algeria. Galula's theories on counterinsurgency have been described by some observers as "the gold standard" and his work heavily shaped FM 3-24. The new document also culled lessons from the successful British counterinsurgency approach during the Malayan Emergency from 1948 to 1960. The resulting doctrine focused on economic development as an aid to counterinsurgency, the possible use of provincial reconstruction teams, and the necessity to address corruption as part of successful counterinsurgency. Paul Cornish highlights the major discussion surrounding FM 3-24 and argues that it focuses on three fundamental issues: the relationship between "kinetic" and "hearts and minds" approaches, the appropriate use of technology in counterinsurgency, and whether counterinsurgency "should be considered the dominant strategic paradigm" in the contemporary international security environment.[48]

FM 3-24 has its share of critics as well. Lydia Walker argues that FM 3-24 defines insurgency according to "the classic, Maoist definition." She contends that this definition does not fit the contemporary realities in Iraq, which are more akin to sectarian strife and civil war in which ethnicity, religion, and tribal affiliations mark the fundamental fissures rather than a purely political insurgency. Frank Hoffman criticizes FM 3-24 by characterizing Iraq as "neo-classical counterinsurgency." Hoffman articulates four main factors that differentiate neo-classical insurgency from classic Maoist insurgency: transnational actors, urbanization, religion, and information. In some ways, the concept of fourth generation warfare is similar to Hoffman's neo-classical counterinsurgency.[49]

The results of FM 3-24 were far-reaching. The manual was instantly and widely popular, evidenced by the University of Chicago Press publishing it in book form. Colin Kahl remarked that "the book has helped make counterinsurgency part of the zeitgeist." The conclusions of FM 3-24 also resonated with many readers. The manual clearly emphasized "winning hearts and minds" over kinetic operations. It also elevated protecting the local population to primary importance. FM 3-24 concentrated thinking about counterinsurgency. Colin Kahl characterizes it as "the single best distillation of current knowledge about irregular warfare." The manual influenced other important planning documents such as FM 3-07 *Stability Operations* published on October 6, 2008, and DOD [Department of Defense] Directive 3000.07 published on December 1, 2008.[50]

Not everyone agreed with the intellectual shift represented by FM 3-24. There was (and is) a school of thought that argued for an approach to counterinsurgency centered on coercion. Craig Collier contends that "Our experience in Iraq verified that lethal operations remain the decisive element of combat power. . . . The emphasis on [counterinsurgency] turned a popular philosophy into a reigning, almost myopic, orthodoxy." While this dialogue remains contentious, the fact that FM 3-24 had far-reaching effects and wide-ranging implications is clear. Contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq therefore triggered a fundamental reevaluation of the role of the U.S. military, especially within the U.S. Army and Marine Corps because those organizations were primarily responsible for carrying out the counterinsurgency mission. Kalev Sepp remarks: "Yet the war has changed markedly, and much of the US Army and Marine Corps with it."[51]

Partly as a result of the intellectual shift represented by FM 3-24 and the implementation of many of its core tenets in the subsequent surge, violence in Iraq fell after 2006. Even critics of the manual acknowledge that fact. Most important, FM 3-24 redefined the role of coalition forces waging contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq. It is this dynamic that simultaneously produced positive results in Iraq and attracted concern regarding its future implications elsewhere.[52]

By 2006, domestic public support within coalition nations, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom, for contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq had fallen to a nadir. Polemical debates over the correct course of action in Iraq were the norm. The U.S. Congress considered withdrawal from Iraq prior to the U.S. midterm election in November 2006. That election resulted in a decisive defeat for the Republican Party, in large part due to the violence in Iraq. The devolving situation, both internationally in Iraq and domestically within coalition nations, triggered a complete internal review of U.S. policy on Iraq. By the fall of 2006, the Bush administration and the U.S. National Security Council decided on a new strategy for Iraq. Known as the "New Way Forward," the fresh approach would include a surge of troops to Iraq to improve the security situation there and ensure a more conducive environment for the much-needed political and economic improvements.[53]

Coalition military commanders immediately began planning for the surge. In December 2006, III Corps commander U.S. Army Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno issued a "gap strategy," referring to the gap left by inadequate ISF in and around Baghdad. Odierno's plan would dedicate half of the troops from the surge to provide security inside Baghdad and half to provide security around Baghdad. U.S. President Bush publicly announced the change in strategy on January 10, 2007.[54]

The surge added roughly 20,000 soldiers to the approximately 130,000 personnel already in Iraq (an increase of more than 15 percent) beginning in February 2007. Coalition leaders deployed the additional forces primarily to Baghdad. They also situated them more among the Iraqi population than previously. The surge included five U.S. Army brigade combat teams, a U.S. Marine expeditionary unit, two additional U.S. Marine battalions, and the requisite support personnel. U.S. Army General David Petraeus assumed command of coalition forces in Iraq and U.S. Army Colonel Peter R. Mansoor served as his executive officer. These additional troops arrived in Iraq by May 2007 and by the middle of that year coalition leaders fully implemented the surge.[55]

The goal of the surge was not just to deploy more troops to Iraq. Joseph Collins explains that the surge underscored that "more troops, different techniques, and a new battle plan were necessary." Some of the changes included an increased emphasis on the protection of the Iraqi population, enhanced partnerships with ISF, and local development projects. One major adjustment embodied in the surge was to shift from the use of FOBs to stationing coalition forces among the Iraqi population. In a July 2008 interview with Charles Gibson, David Petraeus explained that "the only way to secure a population is to live with it—you can't commute to this fight." The use of FOBs from approximately 2004 to 2006 received much criticism. Andrea Lopez remarked that "while the withdrawal from cities made sense in light of concerns about US domestic opinion,

it otherwise contradicted much of counterinsurgency theory and, indeed, military doctrine." By April 2007, coalition forces cordoned off communities with walls, berms, and barbed wire. They also controlled access to them through checkpoints and increased identification measures including biometrics. The changed tactics aimed at protecting the Iraqi population led to the innocuous characterization of "gated communities."[56]

By most accounts, the surge was successful. It was certainly helped by the Sunni Awakening and the limited cease-fire agreed to by Muqtada-al-Sadr and the Mahdi Army. The surge markedly reduced the level of violence in Iraq. Geraint Hughes estimates that insurgent attacks in al-Anbar declined from over 400 per week to less than 100 per week in one year. He also notes that killings in Baghdad declined by over 75 percent in 2007. David Petraeus assesses that the surge reduced violence in Iraq by approximately 60 percent. Joseph Collins characterizes the surge as "a highly successful adaptation to a changed strategic context," while Stuart Griffin concludes that the surge "precipitated a remarkable turnaround in the fortunes of the Iraq campaign." Bing West notes that the increased personnel and the changed tactics of the surge "turned the war around."[57]

The reasons for the success of the surge were many. Peter Mansoor argues convincingly that a large part of the surge's success was due to senior leadership disseminating a common approach to contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq through FM 3-24. Stuart Griffin highlights the "vastly improved coherence of US military operations across the whole of Iraq between 2006 and 2010," that resulted from the surge. One final reason for the success of the surge was the increased capability of the ISF. As a result of the success of the surge and the heightened proficiency of the ISF, coalition forces emphasized transferring responsibility of security in Iraq to the ISF from 2008 onward.[58]

Not all aspects of the surge were positive. The surge diverted attention and resources away from certain areas. One such area was Mosul. Many observers regarded coalition efforts in Mosul as highly successful early in the war. Andrea Lopez characterizes it early on as "the best example of US counterinsurgency policy." As coalition attention and forces shifted elsewhere in Iraq during the surge, Mosul once again came under insurgent attack. During 2007, AQI increased its presence in Mosul. This in turn necessitated an escalation of ISF and coalition efforts there during 2008 in response. As late as 2009, Mosul exhibited signs of renewed insurgency.[59]

In November 2008, the United States signed a Status of Forces Agreement with Iraq. The bilateral security agreement, which went into effect on January 1, 2009, specified that all U.S. troops would leave Iraq by the end of 2011. U.S. President Barack Obama announced on February 27, 2009, that the U.S. combat mission in Iraq would officially end by

August 2010. In July 2009, British forces withdrew from their primary area of southeast Iraq and by the end of that summer British forces in Iraq numbered less than 1,000. OIF transitioned to Operation *New Dawn* on August 19, 2010, and the last U.S. combat unit withdrew from Iraq. Immediately thereafter, the U.S. mission became improving the capacity of ISF, specific counterterrorism strikes, and force protection. A transitional force of approximately 35,000–50,000 U.S. troops remained in Iraq after the official combat mission had ended. These soldiers were predominately organized into Advise and Assist Brigades. Kenneth Pollack and Irena Sargsyan depict these units as capable of "full-spectrum combat" and explain that "Thus, these brigades will perform a dual role: they will serve as advisors in peacetime but could quickly become combat brigades in a crisis."[60]

Military organizations routinely, albeit not always successfully, derive conclusions from the hard-fought experience of previous conflicts. British observers articulated several important lessons learned from contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq. David Ucko highlights three critical deductions from the British experience in Basra that made contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq unique: "the armed forces' misinterpretation of their own legacy, the absence of civilian support and the lack of strategic guidance from Whitehall." Stuart Griffin argues that the British experience in Iraq (and also Afghanistan) spurred a reconsideration of British doctrine similar to the U.S. military's review of their own doctrine that culminated with FM 3-24. For the British, the result was the development of UK Stabilization doctrine, manifested in UK JDP 3-40, *Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution*.[61]

Likewise, U.S. observers have drawn lessons from previous conflicts. For example, the U.S. Army established a formal Center for Army Lessons Learned over 25 years ago. Contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq was no different. Coalition forces, practitioners, and scholars have drawn numerous conclusions from the decade-long counterinsurgency. From the U.S. perspective, David Petraeus distilled 14 key lessons from his time in Iraq, including "Money is ammunition," "Cultural awareness is a force multiplier," and "Success in a counterinsurgency requires more than just military operations." Bing West highlights the critical importance of both the Sunni Awakening and the surge "to turn the war around." Kalev Sepp emphasizes the vital role of alliances in contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq, not just internationally with other countries but, more importantly, locally with the Iraqis themselves. John McCary extends this concept of local allies specifically to al-Anbar and connects it to the importance of culture to contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq. He emphasizes the significance of local authority manifested through tribal affiliations: "Military commanders in Iraq had to find indigenous currents of power and social order, and find a culturally appropriate way to tap into them."[62]

There still is no unanimous agreement on the lessons derived from contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq. Some observers argue that kinetic operations in Iraq outperformed nonkinetic operations, especially economic efforts. Craig Collier reasons that development projects in Iraq were ineffective and contends that "Killing or capturing an insurgent consistently and quantifiably had a more positive impact that anything else we did. . . . The theory that economic development money poured into an area will effectively dry up the insurgent swamp remains a theory without empirical verification."[63]

Two significant conclusions from contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq remain highly debated. The first is whether that experience represents an indication of things to come or simply an anomaly. The answer to this question has significant repercussions. Many argue that Iraq is the model of future conflict and that the U.S. military needs to extend the lessons learned from contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq throughout its doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities spectrum to enhance counterinsurgency capabilities that it will likely employ elsewhere. Others urge caution and insist that Iraq is a unique situation militarily, politically, and culturally and that the U.S. military should avoid emphasizing a conflict that is so distinctive.[64]

The second momentous conclusion from contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq is the absolute necessity to establish clear parameters to determine when to engage in counterinsurgency in the first place. The Iraq experience presents a cautionary example in this regard. Early political decisions and the lack of postconflict planning undermined coalition efforts and fueled the insurgency initially. Coalition forces and military leaders demonstrated remarkable adaptability in a very difficult situation. Contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq makes evident the vital obligation to consider fully the political nature of counterinsurgency and ensure that leaders balance the proper ends, ways, and means prior to entering the fray. To do otherwise would be to ignore the lessons of contemporary counterinsurgency in Iraq.

NOTES

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3. Cornish, "United States and Counterinsurgency," 67, 73, 76–77; Sepp, "From 'Shock and Awe' to 'Hearts and Minds,'" 217–18; Andrea M. Lopez, "Engaging or Withdrawing, Winning or Losing? The Contradictions of Counterinsurgency Policy in Afghanistan and Iraq," *Third World Quarterly* 28:2 (2007), 249–50; David H. Petraeus, "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq," *Military Review* 86:1 (2006), 5. For more on the American "way of war," see Dominic Tierney, *How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010); Thomas G. Mahnken, *Technology and the American Way of War since 1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Colin S. Gray, *Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006); Jeffrey Record, "The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency," *Cato Institute Policy Analysis* 577, September 1, 2006; Thomas G. Mahnken, "The American Way of War in the Twenty-First Century," *Review of International Affairs* 2:3 (2003), 73–84; Brian M. Linn, "*The American Way of War* Revisited," *Journal of Military History* 66 (April 2002), 501–33; Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

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CHAPTER 14

Afghanistan: The Graveyard of Counterinsurgency?

Duncan Anderson

When campaigns grind to an end, books and articles begin to appear, not in ones and twos, but in a veritable flood. The commentary on the Coalition's efforts in Afghanistan is almost entirely critical. It is now an article of faith that the campaign failed to live up to the expectations that were once heaped upon it. It was, in fact, never possible that a Westernized, democratic, wealthy Central Asian Switzerland would emerge from the efforts of the United States and its 41 partner nations, but it is against the failure to achieve these overinflated aims that much of the criticism is now directed. In the general blood-letting and finger-pointing, the shortcomings of the military, particularly the forces of the United States and Britain, have been subjected to a level of analysis that is apparently forensic.

Much of this analysis focuses on the adoption of a counterinsurgency "strategy" in 2009. Former American and British ambassadors to Kabul such as Karl Eikenberry and Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, academics such as Tim Bird, Alex Marshall, Vanda Felbab-Brown, Whitney Kassell, and Anthony King, ex-service personnel such as Evan Munsing and Frank Ledwidge, and journalists such as Matthew Paris, have all argued with varying degrees of vehemence that counterinsurgency, the much vaunted "silver-bullet" that was going to save the Coalition's mission, proved just as illusory as all the other approaches.[1] According to these analyses counterinsurgency was destined to fail because none of the components for a successful campaign were in place. There was an absence of legitimate government at both the national and local levels, there was an all pervasive corruption, there were incompetent security forces that could

not protect the population, there was a failure to produce development, which might have succeeded in winning hearts and minds, there was the terrain—among the most forbidding in which Western soldiers have ever had to operate—and there was a long common border with Pakistan, impossible to seal, which allowed insurgents easy access to safe base areas in the tribal border lands.

In the path of this onslaught, it is easy for more nuanced voices to be lost: the analysis of an aid worker such as Astri Suhrke, the British Territorial Army officer Mike Martin, or that extraordinary reincarnation of a nineteenth-century British political officer, Carter Malkasian, all of whom developed a knowledge of Afghanistan produced by years of continuous service.[2] These authors do not attempt to deny that extraordinary errors were made, that the Coalition suffered from a level of strategic incoherence that made the objectives of the Third Crusade a model of clarity, and that there was always a mismatch between aims and means that would have had Carl von Clausewitz rolling in his grave. But coalitions, by their nature, are often prone to strategic incoherence, even when the enemy is as clear as the Axis during World War II or the Central Powers during World War I. Earlier counterinsurgency campaigns, the British in Malaya and the Americans in Vietnam, were made easy by comparison because they were fought against an ideologically and organizationally unified enemy. Even in Iraq, there was a degree of coherence about the conflict, essentially five overlapping campaigns against enemies who disliked each other almost as much as they disliked the Coalition forces. Trying to understand the opposition in Afghanistan is like trying to describe the shapes made by the particles in a kaleidoscope, and all one has to do is shake the kaleidoscope a little and an entirely new pattern emerges.

Each province in Afghanistan is different. In some, particularly north and west of the Hindu Kush, there are small terrorist bands and occasional terrorist attacks but no deep-seated insurgency, even among the descendents of the Pashtun tribes Abdur Rahmin forced north in the late nineteenth century. Cities such as Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat are obviously prosperous, their economies benefiting from close ties to Uzbekistan and Iran, respectively. The same is true for Kabul, a bustling city of traffic jams, wedding halls, gymnasiums, petrol stations, and modern supermarkets, very much like an Indian city of 30 years ago, just before that country's economic take-off, and the Kabul Valley, where some 5.5 million of Afghanistan's 30 million live. There are terrorist attacks, and the Kabulis regard them as such; there is no single area in the city where the Afghan National Police (ANP) and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) do not have control. The life of the Haqqani operatives in Kabul is often nasty, brutish, and short, and it would be shorter still if a would-be suicide bomber were to fall into the hands of a crowd of Kabulis.

This leaves the east and the south, where there are insurgencies. But even here, as Malkasian and Martin point out, counterinsurgency operations had as many successes as it had failures. Critics point to the failure of a large-scale operation to bring security to the Marjah district to the east of Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital of Helmand, in mid-2010, and the less-than-satisfactory results attained by Operation *Hamkiri* to eliminate the Taliban infrastructure in and around Kandahar. They attribute the abandonment of large-scale COIN operations in the summer of 2010 by General David Petraeus to the failure of these operations, but that is hardly fair, given that the timetable set by the Obama administration meant that there was scarcely enough time for large-scale operations to begin to have an effect. It is largely for this reason that Petraeus placed renewed emphasis on counterterror operations, which is not an alternative to counterinsurgency but often an essential element.[3]

COUNTERINSURGENCY BEFORE McCHRYSTAL

It is not, of course, true that there were no counterinsurgency operations carried out before the arrival of General Stanley McChrystal in Afghanistan in the summer of 2009. History is filled with examples of commanders claiming that they were the ones who alone had the vision to introduce a new war-winning strategy. It is often the case in conventional operations—Montgomery, for example, claiming to have transformed the British Eighth Army virtually overnight in the summer of 1942—but it can also be found in counterinsurgency operations. Sir Gerald Templer claimed this in Malaya in 1952 when he was in fact standing on the shoulders of Harold Briggs, and David Petraeus himself would claim this in Iraq when it was actually the product of a number of task force commanders, such as H. R. McMaster and Sean MacFarland.[4]

While it was true that the U.S. Army had abandoned counterinsurgency after the withdrawal from Vietnam, several of the formations that deployed to Afghanistan at the beginning of operations, the British, the Australians, and the French, had their own very distinctive counterinsurgency cultures, and other national contingents, particularly the Dutch and the Danes, adapted very rapidly. Other contingents, for example, the Germans in Mazar-e-Sharif and the Italians and Spanish in the west, were in areas where there was little or no evidence of insurgency, and hence no need for the development of an appropriate doctrine.

Any attempt to give an objective history of the evolution of counterinsurgency in a country as large and as complex as Afghanistan in a single chapter is bound to be so superficial as to be almost meaningless. This account will therefore center on the operations of the British (Op *HERRICK*) and U.S. armies in Helmand and Kandahar. The author was

twice deployed to the Helmand Valley as an embedded operational military historian, tasked with capturing the realities of operations in the field, and bringing them back to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, so they could be incorporated into the curriculum with little or no delay.[5] Both deployments were with elements of 1 Royal Anglian Regiment, the first in the Sangin area in the summer of 2007 and the second in the Nad-e Ali district in the summer of 2012.[6]

The senior officers of the regiment and the senior NCOs were all hugely experienced in counterinsurgency and peace-keeping, in Northern Ireland, in the Balkans, and in Iraq, and many of the junior officers and NCOs had experienced at least one tour of Iraq. In addition, all had received a basic education in the history and principles of counterinsurgency, either at Sandhurst as cadets, on the Junior Staff and Command Course, or at the old Army Staff College at Camberley. They well understood the importance of intelligence, had the services of a number of excellent Pashto-speaking interpreters, and, Frank Ledwidge to the contrary, had a sophisticated understanding of the tribal dynamics of the upper Helmand Valley. They were only too aware that they were part of a much larger inter-tribal dispute, and that their erstwhile allies, the Alizai, were trying to use them to discomfort a rival Pashtun tribe, the Ishaqzai.[7]

They had one overriding problem. Their area of responsibility covered territory that was roughly half the size of Wales, with a population of more than 100,000, and the entire task force deployed in the upper Helmand Valley numbered fewer than 1,200. They had, too, very few Afghan forces. The reconstituted Afghan National Army was still in its infancy, and the units available in the Sangin area—two platoons that were in effect a warrior band under the command of a Pashtun chieftain, Rizal Khan, who looked as though he had come straight from a page of Kipling—were an unknown quantity.

OPERATION *GHARTSE GHAR*, JUNE–JULY 2007

In a series of operations conducted along the upper reaches of the valley, the companies of the task force frequently engaged numerically superior forces. Operation *Ghartse Ghar* (Mountain Goat), for example, conducted in late June and early July 2007, saw five under-strength platoons of A and B companies and two platoons of Rizal Khan's militia, a total of no more than 140 British and Afghan soldiers, trap at least twice their number of Taliban in a complex double-envelopment. There was heavy fighting for two days, the Taliban counterattacked, and a tactical withdrawal across the valley by the two platoons of B Company to evacuate casualties, a distance of only 1,500 yards, took six hours, with heavy

fighting all the way. The outcome of the fighting was assured, at least in part, by superior tactical skills, but the British also had substantial quantities of firepower on call: 105-mm guns and mortars, and even more impressively Harrier GA aircraft, Apache attack helicopters, and a B1 bomber that flew up the valley in mid-morning June 30, looking as though it had come from the set of a science fiction film. All this ordnance carried its own costs. Even the most skilled forward air controllers sometimes have to take an educated guess as to the coordinates of a target, and there were almost certainly some civilian casualties, although not as many as some critics claim.

One of the criticisms that have been made of British operations during this period is that the soldiers were "trigger-happy," and were prone to engage Afghans on the slightest pretext. During his time in the valley this author saw nothing of the kind. If anything, it was quite the reverse, with nearly superhuman restraint being displayed. For example, after one major night attack when Taliban could be seen quite clearly through night vision goggles carrying their dead away, the commanding officer of B Company ordered his men not to engage because they were a burial party and not carrying long-barreled weapons.

In 2007 the British were able to "clear" but they were unable to "build and hold" in accordance with that well-known tenet of counterinsurgency. The problem was quite simply lack of manpower. It was not a new problem. Much criticism has been leveled at the first contingent, 3 Para (3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment), for not concentrating in a small area around the provincial capital. Several explanations have been offered for this supposed mal-deployment, including an extraordinary thesis by sociologist Anthony King, that the Paras were programmed to do it by their "can do," "crack on" culture.[8] In arguing this case, King fails to recognize the difference between the "crack" of regimental anecdote and the cold sober reality with which officers such as Ed Butler and Stuart Tootal made their decisions. It was not simply the political pressures placed on them by the Afghan administration, but the strategic geography of the valley. Lashkar Gah and the immediate vicinity was not the only vital ground—so too was the Kajaki Dam complex, the fords across the Helmand River west of Sangin, the choke point at Garmser, and several other points besides. Much of the criticism directed at the officers of the first deployment, in fact, might well be an attempt to divert blame from those upon whose shoulders it more truly lies—those who gave them an unworkable plan with too few resources.

Lack of manpower was to bedevil operations in the valley until the last months of 2009. It is extraordinary that a senior civil servant in the MoD could write at this time that "there is no evidence that any increase in forces in Helmand would have a significant effect on the success of operations."[9] In the summer of 2007 lack of manpower affected every

aspect of operations. For example, it meant that there was one intelligence officer in Sangin, Captain Kathy Freeman, a remarkable territorial army officer, the only woman in Sangin at the time, who was also responsible for female engagement. Frequently people were burdened with two or three major, but distinctly different, responsibilities. An Education and Training Service officer, Major Craig Terblanche, who had a degree in geography, and the author, who had been educated as a military historian and had once been an intelligence officer in the Australian Army, took it upon themselves to help Captain Freeman by identifying and mapping the houses and shops in Sangin, visiting the bookshops and talking to the proprietors, and picking up waste paper in the street—bills, receipts, notes—which were then translated and cataloged, from which a picture of the economic life of the town was slowly built up.

The Royal Anglian's tour of 2007 became the subject of regimental legend. The officers and men of the battalion were awarded a Distinguished Service Order and six Military Crosses, one of them posthumously. On the evening of June 30, 2007, after witnessing the opening phases of Ghartse Ghar, this author wrote in his diary, in a parody of General Pierre Bosquet's comment on the charge of the Light Brigade at the Battle of Balaclava, "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la COIN."

NAD-E ALI, 2012

Five years later this author rejoined the Royal Anglian Regiment, this time based in Shawqat, the administrative center for the Nad-e Ali District. As recently as the summer of 2009 Nad-e Ali had been under the firm control of the Taliban, the center from which a number of attacks had been launched against Lashkar Gar, the provincial capital. The BBC's Caroline Wyatt had come to know the area well over the years. In a broadcast from Shawqat in early July 2012 she expressed her astonishment at the transformation she observed. Walking through the bazaar on Sunday, July 1, she commented on the sheer amount of commercial activity in the densely packed streets with stalls selling everything from water melons to radios and automotive parts.

A few days later, this author had exactly the same impression, when visiting the studios of Radio Nad-e Ali, while District Governor Habibullah was conducting a phone-in program. The great majority of the callers were women, asking questions about the availability of health services, educational facilities, job opportunities in nursing and teaching, or complaining about the rising price of cooking oil, the noise young men made at night revving their motorcycles through the streets, or problems in registering their children to take the Konkar (matriculation) exam. There was a comforting familiarity about these conversations. They could

have been heard on virtually any phone-in program in Britain or the United States.

The impression of quotidian normality was confirmed shortly thereafter thanks to several trips from the western extremity of the district, the villages along the Burgha Canal, to the provincial capital. The roads, once little better than farm tracks, and difficult to traverse in winter except on a tractor or a donkey, and been widened and macadamized, and ran straight alongside the canals for mile upon mile. Every couple of kilometers check points manned by a mixture of the Afghan local and national police—there were no Coalition soldiers in evidence—provided a level of security that might have been considered oppressive, had not this society recently emerged from a neo-Hobbesian nightmare. The entire district now seemed peaceful and prosperous, fields filled with ripening corn standing well over six feet in height, pomegranate trees drooping under the weight of their fruit, and stands of marijuana shrubs the size of medium-sized trees. In the blazing July heat the fields were empty, but children and young men played and swam in the road-side canals, and waved to the passing vehicles.

On the outskirts of Lashkar Gah the lieutenant colonel ordered his vehicle to pull over, while he and a number of his soldiers helped pull an Afghan truck from a ditch into which it had rolled. His efforts soon attracted a large crowd, some of whom lent a hand, while others clapped and shouted encouragement. Maybe the same crowd would have shot at the British on another day, but it did not seem likely. The journey from the outskirts of the city to the military compound took nearly an hour, weaving in and out of dense traffic, past market stalls, open-air showrooms packed with scores of motorcycles, and even a parking lot with tractors, SUVs and other utility vehicles for sale. It was near midday and suddenly there were hundreds of children in the streets, the morning shift leaving school, not just boys but large crowds of girls, their hair demurely covered in white scarves, all chattering excitedly.[10]

The difference between the operations of 1 Royal Anglian in the summer of 2007 and 2012 could not have been greater. In 2007, in a six-month tour the battalion fired some one million rounds of small arms ammunition; in 2012 there was scarcely a shot fired in anger. It is always dangerous to talk of transformation—as we have seen the British in 2006 and 2007 were steeped in the lore of counterinsurgency—for the problem was they lacked the resources to put it into effect. All this changed in the spring of 2009, when after months of debate between a counterterror faction, supported by Vice President Joe Biden, and a powerful counterinsurgency lobby headed by General David Petraeus and the hugely influential retired General Jack Keane, the Obama administration decided to try to repeat the strategy, which at that time was still paying dividends in Iraq. In a speech on March 27 Obama declared that "for six years, Afghanistan

has been denied the resources that it demands. Now we must make a commitment that can accomplish our goals."[11]

THE "SURGE"

By the summer of 2009 substantial reinforcements were arriving, and with them came a new commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), General Stanley McChrystal, fresh from the success of the Iraq surge. McChrystal's office in HQ ISAF, colocated with that of British General Nick Parker, deputy commander, ISAF, meant that American and British staffs worked closely together on a new comprehensive plan for operations in Afghanistan. Petraeus's counterinsurgency manual was, in any event, the product in large part of a highly selective reading of previous British campaigns. The military buildup was to be accompanied by the arrival of substantial numbers of civilians, many from the U.S. State Department and other government departments or experts and technicians working on contract, who would advise Afghan ministries and provide staff for an expanded number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

It was easy enough to secure the agreement of the British but McChrystal also had to convince the American civilian establishment in Kabul, which was headed by Karl Eikenberry, a retired general, who was now U.S. ambassador to Kabul. Eikenberry had severe doubts about the ability of the United States to sustain two counterinsurgency campaigns simultaneously, particularly in view of the financial crisis that had broken in New York the previous autumn and was then spreading to all the financial capitals of the world. War weariness, too, was beginning to set in. Now in their eighth year of supporting military operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the "will" of a significant minority of the American population was beginning to fade, a process Carl von Clausewitz, writing two centuries earlier, had identified as potentially fatal to a nation's ability to achieve its objectives. It was not just in terms of material resources but also will, in the sense that Clausewitz used the term. Eikenberry was more aware than McChrystal, who had spent most of his career well beyond the politics of the Washington "Beltway," that Obama's timetable for withdrawal had been dictated by the United States' electoral cycle, not by the situation that might then exist in Afghanistan. His concern was that McChrystal might be pursuing a chimera, the illusion that he would be able to get the president to extend his deadline.[12]

The ambassador was also concerned that a counterinsurgency campaign that aimed to win the Afghan people over to the Afghan government would fail if that government was regarded by the majority as illegitimate. The period August to November 2009 saw Afghanistan in a

political crisis, as the elections of August 20 attracted less than a third of the electorate, and was characterized by widespread ballot stuffing, with one prominent American diplomat, Peter Galbraith, declaring the entire process fraudulent.

AN INTEGRATED PLAN

It was clear from the beginning that there were deep-seated tensions between McChrystal and Eikenberry, but for the moment the general and the ambassador papered over their differences by producing a document entitled "United States Integrated Civilian–Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan,"[13] in effect a blueprint for nation building, one of the most ambitious statements of intent since the Briggs Plan in Malaya nearly 60 years earlier. The document began by listing the problems faced by Afghanistan: a multifaceted insurgency supported by the Deobandi and Wahabist madrassas in Pakistan and elements within the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI); an incompetent government riddled with corruption; widespread criminality, particularly in those areas designated the "narco-state"; low levels of investment and education, coupled with high unemployment, particularly among young men in the 18 to 30 age group; and a general lack of infrastructure, which ranged from poor roads to frequently interrupted transmission of electricity. The plan went on to outline 11 transformative effects that the campaign was designed to produce, the provision of security by the expansion of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), the creation of an accountable and transparent system of government, the establishment of a system of justice based on equality before the law, and the development of the economy, with the establishment of viable markets for agricultural produce.

While McChrystal and Eikenberry cobbled together a comprehensive plan, ISAF's new director of intelligence, Major General Michael Flynn, conducted a thoroughgoing analysis of intelligence gathering. While there were some honorable exceptions, for example, the holistic procedures adopted by the British analysts, the bulk of ISAF intelligence gathering was enemy centric, and was conducted in discreet departments, with little or no cross-fertilization. A huge amount of information was being gathered, but not utilized to any great effect. Reorganizing both collection and analysis, Flynn established teams of experts, for example, not just military intelligence assessors, but historians, economists, anthropologists, linguists, political scientists, sociologists, virtually every discipline that could shed some light on the workings of dynamics of Afghan life at local level, and formed them into teams tasked with reporting on the politics, culture, and economy of entire provinces. This reorganization was

designed to provide ISAF with information about the sea in which the Taliban "fish" swam. Once ISAF had a clear picture of the political and social dynamics of a particular area, military force and aid packages could be targeted much more effectively than had hitherto been the case.[14]

In the late summer and autumn of 2009 substantial Western reinforcements began arriving in Afghanistan, a process that was accompanied by a rapid expansion of the ANSF. The new plan envisaged two major offensives against the Taliban in the south of the country, the first against areas under Taliban control in Helmand and the second against Kandahar. Both operations were to be followed quickly by the establishment of an effective local government—some wits called it "government in a box"—and it was, in effect, the establishment of something very like a colonial administration though it was never called that. It had many of the hallmarks of the lists of "good things to do," which were being produced by numerous conferences on Afghanistan then taking place within the Washington Beltway and at Wilton Park and Chatham House in Britain. The result was a process that was manpower intensive and very expensive, but for the moment that was of little account.

In Helmand operational planning for the coming offensive was carried out by the Headquarters of Regional Command South West under the command of General Nick Carter. The British already had a master plan for Helmand, an outgrowth of the so-called Helmand road map produced two years earlier, which had since grown into an immensely complex but supposedly integrated series of military and civilian activities, but which dovetailed quite neatly with the McChrystal-Eikenberry "Integrated Civilian–Military Campaign Plan." By the autumn the forces available for operations in Helmand had grown to three brigade groups, the British 11th, the U.S. Marine Corps 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), and the ANA's 3rd brigade of the 205th Corps, a total of some 15,000 troops, a far cry from the 1,200 who had tried to control the valley as recently as the summer of 2007.

The key to the development of Helmand was the Lashkar Gah area, the population and economic hub of the province, but it was threatened by two Taliban strongholds, one some 20 miles due west in the Nad-e Ali district, the other 24 miles to the south west, in the area of Marjah. Both areas had been developed in the 1950s by the American-funded and -managed Helmand Valley Authority, which had constructed a network of irrigation canals, opening up thousands of new acres of land for farming, and attracting thousands of immigrants from other areas of Afghanistan, who had settled in ethnically distinct villages, though the original Pashtun inhabitants remained the majority in both areas.[15]

The British and Americans decided to attack simultaneously, with 11th Brigade concentrating on Nad-e Ali and the 2nd MEB concentrating on Marjah, with the assets of the ANA's 3rd Brigade divided between the

British and the Americans, in order to give the Afghans experience at the conduct of complex operations at formation level. In order to emphasize the joint nature of the enterprise, the operation was code-named Moshtarak, the Dari for "together." It was to be conducted in a logical sequence, that of "shape, clear, hold, and build," and it was in the shape phase that the two operations diverged dramatically.

PREPARATION FOR *MOSHTARAK*: OPERATION *TOR SHPAH*

Both the commander of 11th Brigade, Brigadier James Cowan, and Major General Nick Carter, were concerned that an area to the east of the Nahr-e Bughra Canal known as the Chah-e-Anjir triangle would provide a safe haven for Taliban who might be driven south by Operation *Moshtarak*. Since first coming into the Helmand British knowledge of the tribal structures and politics of Helmand had increased enormously. A TA officer, Captain Mike Martin, who was researching a doctoral thesis on the politics of Helmand, had identified 37 different tribes and ethnicities, had mapped their political allegiances, the pattern of landownership, the class structures, and the differences between discontent that arose from issues such as landownership and access to water and that which was inspired by the Islamist propaganda of the Taliban. It was detailed work of this sort that allowed the brigade to develop strategies that would separate the hardcore Taliban from those whose concerns were essentially reconcilable.

Before Operation *Tor Shpah*, Pashto for "Dark Night," the codename given to the seizure of the Chah-e-Anjir triangle, could begin the brigade was hit by a tragedy, which for a time threatened to derail all the plans, but turned out to be pivotal to future success. On November 5, 2009, at a police post code-named "Blue 25," one of the worst "green-on-blue" incidents, of the entire campaign occurred when an Afghan policeman shot and killed five soldiers of the Grenadier Guards, including the regimental sergeant major. The effect not just on the regiment but on the entire brigade was depressing in the extreme. To the north, No 2 Company Grenadier Guards ambushed and killed a squad/section strength unit of Taliban, which resulted in a series of company strength Taliban attacks against their positions, which the Grenadiers annihilated in a series of bloody actions. Though they had not intended to do so, No 2 Company had in effect wiped out the Taliban's operational reserve in this area. The second outcome concerned the police. Because the ANP in the area were clearly unreliable, the entire force was stood down, and new personnel drafted in, including a highly trained unit of the elite Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP).[16]

By early December Lieutenant Colonel Roly Walker commanded the strongest battle group the British had hitherto deployed, Battle Group

Centre South; though it had absorbed so many other assets it was nicknamed "Battle Group Centre of the World."[17] In addition to three company groups of the Grenadier Guards, Walker commanded company groups from 1 Royal Anglian, 1 Royal Welsh and 2 Lancs (2nd Battalion, The Lancashire Regiment), along with Tiger Teams of Afghan Territorial Force 444, elements of ANCOP and the ANA, and the American counter-IED unit, Task Force Thor. Of equal importance to the military assets were the contacts that Walker was able to develop thanks to District Governor Habibullah, who had been a police captain in Garmser at the time of the Soviet occupation. Habibullah had excellent relations with the head of the local NDS. Together they made contact via cell phone with the elders in a number of the key villages such as Zorabad, Baluchan, and Kakaran, which were the principal villages in Chah-e Mirza, and brokered a meeting in the district center in Shawqat. Thanks to these contacts Walker was able to develop a deeper understanding of the political complexities of the area, which helped considerably in targeting military operations. The British now knew where the insurgents and their supporters lived, how they moved through the area, and how they were supported. In poor villages such as Noorzo Kalay and Zorobad, the Taliban had been running protection rackets, demanding food, fuel, and accommodation from the inhabitants in exchange for not beating them, or worse. As a consequence the Taliban were loathed in these locations. In other villages, the homes of more substantial landowners, who were often making a considerable profit from growing opium in the semi-desert areas beyond the canal, the Taliban had greater support, in exchange for the protection they could provide in moving and marketing the crops. With information of this sort to hand, British fighting patrols could move into the key locations, drawing insurgent bands into ambushes, or trapping them in cross-fires as they attempted to withdraw.[18]

By mid-December a combination of No 2 Company's battles at Loy Mandah and the deep penetration raids into Chah-e Mirza had fractured Taliban command and control and considerably degraded their combat effectiveness. The battle group now signposted its intention of occupying Nad-e Ali in the near future by placing posters on walls, distributing leaflets, and having Habibullah announce the plan at *shuras* (consultative assemblies, usually of local elders and leaders), relying on word of mouth to do the rest. Walker was anxious that "the local population stay inside their compounds, that is what the governor wanted and what the police wanted, everyone to stay at home whilst we did this," sentiments echoed by No 2 Company commander, Major Richard Green, who thought that "the worst thing we could have done was to come in and fight the Taliban around their homes, destroying their property."[19]

The battle group struck on the night of December 27–28. A Company1 Royal Welsh assaulted by helicopter into Norzoo Kalay, while British

special forces landed in Baluchan, where a Taliban HQ had been identified, both attacks dislocating any Taliban attempt at coordinated resistance. At first light the CVRTs (combat vehicle reconnaissance [tracked]) of the Royal Anglians rolled north across the district from Shin Kalay, to link up with the Royal Welsh. The commander of the spearhead, Captain Graham Goodey, recalled that people stood at the side of the roads looking in amazement, overwhelmed by what looked like columns of tanks. To the west, a company of the ANA moved into heavily populated Chah-e Mirza, while 2 Company of the Grenadier Guards advanced from the south to link up. By 1500 hours Goodey's CVRTs were just to the west of Noorzo Kalay when at least a dozen men on motor bikes drove at considerable speed out of the village, and headed southeast as rapidly as the muddy roads would allow. They were obviously Taliban but Goodey chose not to engage. He said later that the incident was "a small example of what the operation was trying to do. It was aimed at compelling the enemy not to fight . . ."[20] Lieutenant Colonel Walker summarized the operation as "an armed ramble across wet farmland, which reminded us of our pre-deployment training in Thetford."[21]

Walker now exploited his success. In the next 24 hours the battle group established a frontline running south east from Noorzo Kalay. North of this line, the Taliban regrouped between Naqulabad Kalay and Showal. They soon attempted to infiltrate south, but were stopped in a series of ambushes. Moving to the west beyond the Bughra Canal, they attempted to infiltrate in the southeast between Noorzo Kalay and Chah-e Mirza, but were once again detected. The frontline held throughout January, while the reconnaissance platoons of 1 Grenadier Guards and 1 Royal Anglian conducted fighting patrols onto Taliban-controlled areas, breaking up potential insurgent concentrations.

The area had been shaped and cleared, and was now being held. While the frontlines were still being consolidated, the task force commenced the build phase. The Taliban had isolated the district by seeding the roads with networks of mines and IEDs, the clearing of which might have taken months, but for the arrival of Task Force Thor, whose huge futuristic machines used steel claws attached to cranes, to tear up IEDs from the roads and ditches, and detonate them. Thor's machinery was compartmentalized, "so if you blow a bit up it's just replaced, and you keep going . . . their vehicles are blown up every day, day in and day out, and they crack on with it . . . absolutely incredible."[22] Behind Thor came bulldozers, gravel trucks, road- and bridge-building equipment, steam rollers, and bitumen tankers, giving the district a network of sealed roads. And behind them came logistic convoys, bringing blankets and food, a foretaste to the population of what the government could do for them.

When the district governor held his first shura in Baluchan on December 28, only a small number attended. They were grateful for the blankets

and the food, but they doubted he would still be able to visit a few days hence. Only the continued presence of their own security forces would convince the local population to come off the fence. Walker, Cowan, and Carter worked furiously to ensure that ANCOP, ATF444, and the ANA remained in the area, eventually succeeding, but only after enlisting high-level support in Kabul. But the district governor needed to be able to offer people more than security to win their support, and he had few resources of his own. By an incredible stroke of good fortune—neither Carter nor Cowan knew they were coming—a team from Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture (AVIPA) arrived at the beginning of the operation. They brought with them the resources needed to kick-start an agricultural economy, from seed and fertilizer to money, which they now channeled into Nad-e Ali through the district governor. As the days passed the numbers attending shuras grew steadily, so that by January 19, 2010, enough *people* were attending for Governor Mangal, the provincial governor, to chair a shura in Chah-e Mirza. By the end of January, thanks to aid from AVIPA and DST, more than 1,000 locals were employed in construction projects, clearing canals, building and mending wells, repairing sluice gates, and mending roads.[23]

The shura was the traditional Afghan way of exchanging ideas, but the numbers who could attend were limited, and were only ever adult males. The battle group's influence officer, Captain Richard Jakeman, a member of the Honourable Artillery Company, whose civilian career was working as a marketing manager for Sky Television, knew that for local government to take hold in the district, it had to be given a human face, and that face would be Habibullah. Since December Jakeman had been working to set up a local radio station, Radio Nad-e Ali, but had found the British logistic system unresponsive to his requirements. It took nearly a month to accumulate all the necessary equipment, some borrowed from the Americans and other Coalition partners, and some brought back by officers in their Bergens returning from R&R in Britain. In the meantime Habibullah's officials had handed out more than 7,000 wind-up radios at shuras, which proved to be hugely popular, particularly in areas without mains supply and where shortage of fuel meant that generators could be run for only an hour or two each day.[24]

One of the most important technological developments the Coalition had brought to Afghanistan was a mobile phone network that by 2009 covered the Nad-e Ali district of Helmand. Cheap mobile phones costing only two or three thousand Afghani ($4.00 to $5.00) were also widely available. At shuras the district governor handed out business cards with the new radio station's telephone number printed on them, with sim and top-up cards attached. Meanwhile Jakeman had been conducting market research, had hired and coached local presenters, and had put together a program schedule, which interspersed religion, education, music, news

and current affairs, and, most important of all, phone-in programs. Hitherto only accessible at shuras, the district governor had a regular slot in the schedule, during which he would take calls, and deal with people's problems on air. By the end of January the district governor's program was receiving more than 300 calls a day, although Habibullah was hard pressed to deal with more than a dozen or so in any one program. Many of the calls came from women, hugely important within the Afghan home, but until now virtually impossible to influence directly. Radio Nad-e Ali allowed the district governor to become a "personality." A measure of the name recognition this gave Habibullah was attendance at shuras, which went from about 40 people per meeting in late December to more than 500 per meeting by late January.[25]

OPERATION *MOSHTARAK*

Tor Shpah was a hugely successful example of what a properly conducted counterinsurgency operation built around carefully phased shape, clear, hold, and build sequences could achieve. Possibly because it was so successful it has received very little attention. The media are rarely interested in success stories, and the British, while happy to publicize glorious defeats, rarely write about their real achievements. This lack of public attention is not true about Operation *Moshtarak*, widely publicized as the cornerstone of McChrystal's counterinsurgency campaign, in part to consolidate support in the United States, in part to shape the perceptions of the people in the areas in eastern Helmand that were going to be the scene of action: northern Nad-e Ali and Marjah. Both operations, but particularly the latter, have been subjected to considerable scholarly analysis and media coverage, including a 90-minute documentary film, the *Battle of Marjah*, hugely popular in the United States, which has served to help form the perceptions of the American people about the war in Afghanistan. The film is sympathetic to the Marines—they are skillful, brave, and humane—but they are lost in an environment that they don't understand, and which will eventually defeat them. Broadcast in early 2011, it helped to contribute to the growing negative perceptions of the Marjah operation, at the very point when the battle was turning in America's favor.[26]

In Moshtarak the British possessed many advantages the Americans lacked. They had been in theatre for several months, Tor Shpah had served as a very useful rehearsal, and their intelligence as to the disposition of the people and the location of the Taliban was excellent. The dominant tribe was the Noorzais, who coexisted uneasily with the Taliban, who had widespread support among the Ishaqzai tribes, so that the removal of the Taliban infrastructure would not be entirely unwelcome.

As in the earlier operation, in late January and early February special forces and fighting patrols began disrupting Taliban command and control networks, and removing key leaders.[27]

By contrast, most of the Americans had been in the Nad-e Ali area for only a few weeks, and had little or no information about the Marjah district. It was superficially like northern Nad-e Ali, a network of canals, compounds, and a sprawling town, built around five bazaars. Its population was estimated to be anywhere between 50,000 and 100,000 people, the descendants of immigrants who had arrived in the 1950s from all over Afghanistan. It was assumed that no one tribal group would be dominant, although it was subsequently discovered that the Ishaqzai were major power brokers.[28]

What the Americans didn't know at this time was that the Taliban had been welcomed into the area in 2007 as liberators. Until that time the Marjah district had been under the control of Abdur Rahmin Jan, a warlord masquerading as a chief of police, who had controlled the growing and harvesting of opium, had taxed villages heavily, and had meted out punishments in the form of severe beatings and executions, usually by beheading. The Taliban, under the command of a popular and charismatic leader, had forced Jan and his henchmen to flee to the relative safety of Lashkar Gah, where they waited for the tide to turn. The great majority of the population feared that the arrival of the Coalition would herald the return of Abdur Rahmin Jan, a prospect they regarded with dread.[29]

The Taliban leadership, while they were prepared to abandon areas of peripheral importance, such as northern Nad-e Ali, was prepared to fight for Marjah, which was the center of opium production, and which had workshops in which IEDs could be manufactured and weapons repaired. With the support of the majority of the population the Taliban constructed a sophisticated defense of the Marjah area, lacing the approach routes with mines and IEDs, which bore all the hallmarks of assistance from professional military officers. The complex of thick mud-brick walls, canals, and irrigation ditches provided almost unlimited possibilities for the defenders, while deep cisterns furnished both protection and concealment.[30]

At 0400 on February 13 scores of troop-carrying helicopters landed at key points in both northern Nad-e Ali and Marjah, depositing 1,200 troops in the middle of Taliban-held areas, the first of more than 15,000 committed to the operation. It was raining and very cold, conditions that the Coalition hoped would keep all but the most dedicated Taliban huddled around their fires. In Nad-e Ali there was little or no resistance. At the sound of the helicopters dozens of men were seen leaving the area as fast as their motorcycles could carry them. Within a matter of days the sequence already demonstrated in Tor Shpah was put into effect, with mine clearance, road construction, supply convoys, shuras, and local

elections, and then the enrolment of the local police, to provide a permanent security presence.[31]

THE BATTLE OF MARJAH

In Marjah it was very different. The first waves of Marines found themselves engaged in prolonged urban combat against an estimated 2,000 Taliban fighters, organized into a loose confederation of some 470 three- or four-man squads, ideal for defensive operations, involving hit-and-run attacks, in this type of environment. Some commentators at the time said it was as heavy as the Fallujah battles of 2004—but it was not. There was no employment of main battle tanks or massed artillery. The emphasis was on the avoidance of unnecessary material destruction or civilian casualties. To this extent it was much more like the prolonged battle the Americans fought for Ramadi in Al Anbar Province throughout the summer and autumn of 2006.[32] The problem was that ISAF's media operations had already raised expectations of a speedy victory, and when the fighting dragged on public opinion began to swing against the operation, to the extent that the operation in northern Nad-e Ali was largely ignored.

Marjah was heavily populated, and although the population had been warned of the impending operation, most had not left, either because of Taliban intimidation and the dangers of trying to pass through extensive mine-fields or because they were actually committed to resist any attempts to reimpose the rule of Abdur Rahmin Jan. The inevitable result was a number of civilian casualties, which were seized on by those elements of the Western media who were hostile to the Afghan intervention. There were undoubtedly some very unfortunate accidents, but there were also occasions when Taliban fighters fired from buildings crowded with women and children, usually from tribes who had given the Taliban less than wholehearted support.

The flexibility afforded the Taliban by fighting in small squads meant that when the Americans declared they had cleared an area, fighting would erupt only a few days later. In northern Marjah, for example, the Marines bribed some twenty shopkeepers to open their shops, only to find a few weeks later that all but five had been shut down. Attempts at co-opting military age males into money-for-work schemes were also short-lived. The men who took part were either dragged out of their homes at night and severely beaten or executed.

Having spent much of his career in special operations General McChrystal was less adept in dealing with the media than some others who had lived in the glare of publicity. In a discussion with General Nick Carter on the progress of the campaign McChrystal said that although ISAF forces were slowly winning the battle for Marjah, the perception

among American's allies was that it was "a bleeding ulcer." It was this comment that a respected journalist used as his headline, at which point it went "viral." McChrystal's media cell attempted to publish the real comments but it was like shouting into a hurricane. The public perception was that the battle was either stalemated or had been lost.[33]

The irony was that it was at this point that the tide had begun to turn in the Americans' favor, with the leaders of a small tribe who had long been oppressed by the Ishaqzai and their allies approaching the Americans and offering their services as local police. Over the next few weeks as word got out that Abdur Rahmin Jan would not be returning an increasing number of the more marginal tribes began to change allegiances, being co-opted into the Afghan local police, so that the conflict began to assume the character of an inter-tribal war, with the Americans as the very powerful allies of a confederation of the formerly dispossessed. It was not quite what had happened in Iraq with the Al Anbar awakening, but it was very close.[34]

KANDAHAR AND THE ARGHANDAB

The battle of Marjah had been intended as the prelude for an offensive against the Taliban in Kandahar, Operation *Hamkiri*. Kandahar was a very different prospect from Marjah, a city that had grown to a population of around 800,000, with perhaps another one million living in sprawling suburbs, which was of immense cultural and historical significance to all Afghans, but particularly Pashtuns. It was here that many of the great figures of Afghan history were commemorated: the shrines to Hotak and his mother, who had liberated the Pashtuns from Persian overlords, and of Ahmed Shah Durrani, the founder of the Durrani empire, the precursor of the modern Afghan state.[35]

It was not simply the size or cultural significance of Kandahar that made operations difficult. The city was virtually the fiefdom of Ahmed Wali Karzai, half-brother of the president, Hamid. Since 2001 Ahmed Karzai and his allies had established a political and economic stranglehold on Kandahar, helped greatly by lucrative ISAF contracts and by the CIA, which had found him a useful ally. Ahmed Karzai had a controlling interest in two security companies, employing some 10,000 men, and a number of logistic and trucking concerns, his security companies providing protection for the truck convoys.

In addition, he had a controlling interest in a vast modern gated community being built to the north of Kandahar, some 10,000 houses designed for the commercial and administrative elite of the city. While there was nothing objectionable about such an enterprise, it was widely believed throughout Afghanistan that he had acquired the land as a result of some questionable real estate deals.

What set Ahmed Karzai apart from successful businessmen like him in North America and Europe was his control not just of his security companies—in effect private armies—but also of the Kandahar Strike Force. Although under the control of the CIA, Ahmed Karzai had been instrumental in recruiting all 500 members of the force, which was based just to the west of the city in Camp Gecko, the name the Americans had given to the palace complex once occupied by Mullah Omar, who, despite his advocacy of a life of ascetic simplicity, had developed a taste for the finer things of life once he had taken power.

To the Americans Ahmed Karzai was a very recognizable type—a cross between Boss Tweed of Tammany Hall, Mayor Rizzo of Philadelphia, and Al Capone of Chicago, in short, a corrupt, urban warlord. The American ambassador regarded Ahmed Karzai as a huge liability to any attempt to effect population-centric COIN in Kandahar. The State Department's aim was the establishment of a functioning bureaucracy answerable to a democratically elected government. Under Ahmed Karzai any semblance of normal provincial or city government had virtually ceased to exist. Polls conducted under the auspices of the State Department indicated a growing level of resentment toward Ahmed Karzai, a sentiment that was leading to an increase in support for the Taliban. In November 2009 Eikenberry had proposed that Ahmed Karzai be removed from Kandahar, a demand vigorously resisted by his half-brother, Hamid Karzai, the president.[36]

The tensions inherent in the relationship between Eikenberry and McChrystal now became overt. The general regarded the maintenance of a working relationship with the Afghan president as central to his counterinsurgency strategy, and found the State Department's insistence on political probity a distraction. To many in the military, State was putting the cart before the horse. One could not have any degree of political or administrative probity until one had security, and to achieve this, one had to work with the grain of the country. Even with the surge in forces, ISAF would be light on the ground, and would not be able to reach the force densities required to achieve security without the assistance of allied war lords.[37]

Much to the irritation of the U.S. embassy, on April 9, 2010, McChrystal and President Karzai visited Kandahar, where as guests of Ahmed Karzai they addressed a carefully vetted shura of some 2,000 elders and other community leaders, during which the general explained the purposes and timetable of Operation *Hamkiri*. Initially intended for the spring of 2010, the unexpectedly heavy fighting in Marjah delayed the start of the operation, McChrystal and Karzai returning to Kandahar on June 13, to reassure local leaders that Hamkiri was indeed going to take place.[38]

Over the previous two years areas to the west and southwest of Kandahar along the Arghandab Valley, namely the districts of Arghandab,

Zhari, and Panjwai, had been steadily infiltrated by the Taliban, and in some cases tribes opposed to the Barakzai ascendency represented by President Karzai and his brother Ahmed, particularly the Ghilzai and their allies, had decided to make common cause with the Taliban. Intelligence estimated total enemy strength along the Arghandab at around 4,000 Taliban, well equipped with 82-mm mortars, recoilless rifles, heavy machine guns, RPG rocket launchers, and AK-47 automatic rifles. The Arghandab was like the Helmand, heavily canalized, with numerous mud-walled compounds and villages, linked together by narrow footpaths, affording the insurgents almost unlimited possibilities for defense, which the Taliban enhanced by laying down dense networks of IEDs.

Like the British in Helmand, in 2008 and 2009 the Canadians had attempted to clear parts of the Arghandab, but had never had sufficient forces to hold any territory. Indeed, by 2009 the Canadians were forced very much onto the defensive, concentrating on their own force protection and the protection of their resupply routes. The situation in the Zhari district was particularly serious. Highway One, the main route from Kandahar to Lashkar Gah, skirted parallel to the Arghandab for about 20 miles, which exposed convoys to regular attacks. Though the Taliban could never cut the route for more than a day or so, the fact they could do it at all added to a general sense of insecurity that was becoming all pervasive.[39]

In the city of Kandahar, the situation was very different. The built-up area was oblong in shape, some 10 kilometers from east to west, and 5 kilometers north to south, with the old eighteenth-century city, a maze of alleys and courtyards, occupying an area of some 2 square kilometers in the south center of the city, home to some 80,000 people. To the north of the old city there was a complex of cemeteries, covering an area about 2,000 meters east to west, and 500 meters north to south, which created a large open space separating modern urban development in the north from the old city. There was more modern urban development to the west, connected to the old city by three wide boulevards running more or less parallel.

The Taliban controlled only one area of the city, the suburb of Maljat, lying to the southwest of the city, which was used as a supply depot and a rest and recreation center for the forces in the Arghandab. But Kandahar was by no means secure. The Taliban could operate from a number of safe houses, particularly in the rabbit warren of lane ways in the old city. From these locations they conducted hit-and-run operations, assassinations, IED strikes, and, increasingly, suicide bomber attacks. They could, too, pull off the occasional headline-grabbing spectacular. In 2008, for example, the Taliban put in a platoon-size attack on Sarpoza prison on the western outskirts of Kandahar, which enabled over 1,100 inmates to escape, including at least 400 Taliban.

Like previous operations in Nad-e Ali and Marjah, Operation *Hamkiri* began with a prolonged shaping phase, as ISAF maneuvered its forces into position. In mid-June engineers began constructing the first of a ring of 16 block houses around Kandahar, which were designed to inhibit easy Taliban movement to and from the city. Manned by combined platoons of U.S. Army MPs, ANCOP, and ANP, they were a challenge to the Taliban, who responded predictably with rocket and mortar attacks. Simultaneously, the Taliban stepped up its program of intimidation. In late June a suicide bomber attacked the wedding party of a prominent member of the Afghan Local Police, killing 37 and maiming many more. Assassinations rose steadily throughout the summer, ISAF intelligence recording at least 397 between mid-June and mid-September, a rate of around 4 to 5 per day.

American and Afghan Special Forces were equally active, raiding into the Arghandab and Kandahar, in an effort to disrupt Taliban command and control. By late July the build-up was nearing completion, with at least a dozen American and Afghan battalions, and a force of Afghan Border Police, essentially the Achakzai tribe of Spin Boldak, under the command of their charismatic leader, Abdul Razak. On the night of July 25 Afghan commandos, accompanied by their American advisors, launched a helicopter-borne assault on the heavily fortified village of Khastawe Sufla in the Arghandab. The Taliban quickly recovered from their surprise, put on a series of determined counterattacks, and after sustaining substantial casualties the commandos were forced to withdraw on July 27. Angered by this initial reverse, on July 30 the Americans and Afghans put in a full scale ground assault, spearheaded by 1/320 Field Artillery Regiment but eventually involving 2/508th Airborne, 1/66th Armored (acting as infantry), the 3/3 ANCOP Battalion, the 1st Battalion of the 1st Brigade of the ANA's 205th Corps, and a battalion of the Afghan Border Police. This attack, the largest concentration of force yet achieved in the Arghendab, steadily drove the Taliban from the northern part of the valley.

By late August ISAF had concentrated three American and three Afghan battalions for the next phase of Hamkiri, the clearing of Zhari and Panjwai, an operation codenamed *Dragon Strik*e. It was a slow, systematic advance, clearing dense fields of IEDs, while frequently under harassing fire. Unlike Marjah, once the Taliban had been cleared from an area ISAF found that hundreds of elders were attending shuras, and that up to 6,000 young men were participating in cash for work programs by early October. In order to provide permanent security, ISAF implemented a local community watch program called "Sons of the Shura," and began recruiting for an Afghan Local Police force.[40]

From August onwards ISAF and Afghan success in the Arghandab pushed increasing numbers of Taliban into Kandahar, where they participated enthusiastically in the program of assassination and intimidation.

On August 18 they murdered Mahammad Rasul Popalzai, the Dand district police chief and a close ally of Ahmed Karzai, and brought the wrath of Kandahar's boss down upon their heads. Spearheaded by the Achakzai of the Afghan Border Police, and supported by the Kandahar Strike Force and three companies of the U.S. 504th Military Police Battalion, on August 27 a Coalition force pushed into Maljat, systematically clearing IED ambushes, driving the Taliban from their stronghold, and detaining more than 100, who were imprisoned in Sarposa.[41] The loss of Maljat was a serious blow to the Taliban. They continued a campaign of bombing and assassination, but were also the targets for NDS and U.S. Special Forces night raids, which steadily eroded their effectiveness. Fearing their influence was diminishing, in late October, 30 Taliban rode on motorcycles in a defiant procession through the streets of central Kandahar, which was generally regarded as the product of desperation, rather than a display of strength.

THE DISMISSAL OF McCHRYSTAL

Apart from advisors and contractors, the Americans kept their forces out of Kandahar, in an effort to make security in the city an overtly Afghan responsibility. There was, however, considerable development work, the most important of which was the installation of the first of eight huge generators, costing a total of $225 million, which were intended to provide 10 megawatts of electricity to Kandahar industrial park.[42] The provision of these generators represented the high water mark of American counterinsurgency operations, and would be the last aid package on such a scale. Having already had one experience with the damage the media could do, in the misinterpretation of his remarks about the progress of the Marjah operation, on June 23 General McChrystal was relieved of command by Obama, ostensibly as a result of remarks he had made to a reporter for *Rolling Stone* magazine. In fact, McChrystal's removal suited the White House's reelection strategy for 2012, in that it allowed the president to appoint his most dangerous rival for the presidency, General David Petraeus, to Kabul in McChrystal's place.

Petraeus had been portrayed as the general who had reeducated the U.S. Army in counterinsurgency, but he was by no means fanatically devoted to such operations. In consultation with Eikenberry, he quickly decided that Obama's timetable, which dictated that U.S. forces would begin to withdraw in 2011, well before the 2012 elections, made the conduct of classical counterinsurgency utilizing American forces all but impossible. Petraeus therefore modified policy. American forces would dramatically increase Special Forces raids and drone strikes, essentially counterterror operations, while the recruitment and training of the

Afghan National Army and other forces would be accelerated. There would still be counterinsurgency but increasingly it would be the preserve of the Afghan and not the Western armies.[43]

TALIBAN RESURGENCE?

The results of the COIN campaign of 2010 were not immediately apparent. The Quetta Shura were able to strike back into Kandahar with a series of spectacular operations. On April 15, 2011, the Taliban assassinated Khan Mohammad Mujhaid, the Kandahar police chief. Nine days later 400 prisoners, almost all dedicated Taliban fighters, escaped from Sarposa prison through a tunnel dug under Highway One from an apparently abandoned compound on the south side of the road. Some were soon recaptured, but most joined in the Taliban's summer offensive, which began on May 7 with an attack by 18 insurgents on the governor's heavily defended compound. On July 12 the Taliban claimed their most spectacular success to date, with the assassination of Ahmed Wali Karzai, though it was by no means clear whether the Talban were in fact instrumental in his murder.

Elsewhere there appeared to be no diminution in the frequency of Taliban attacks. On September 13, 2011, for example, the Haqqani network launched a complex attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, which left 9 dead and 23 wounded. On April 15 the following year, the Taliban launched its spring offensive, simultaneous attacks on embassies, NATO bases, and parliament and government buildings throughout Kabul and the eastern provinces. Two months later Haqqani struck at the Spozhmai Hotel on Lake Qargha to the west of Kabul, a luxury resort for the elite of Afghanistan. And on September 14, 2012, in an incident that caused huge embarrassment to ISAF, 15 Taliban dressed in American uniforms penetrated the defenses of Camp Bastion. In the ensuing battle, all but one of the Taliban was killed, while Coalition forces lost two killed and nine wounded. There was also considerable damage to material, including the destruction of eight Harrier aircraft, making this raid comparable to anything British Commandos or American Rangers had achieved during World War II.

The impression of a campaign that was teetering on the edge of failure was reinforced throughout this period by the more or less constant attacks on small, isolated American outposts in Kunar and in Nuristan, where the tribes had resisted not just the Russians but also the Taliban. Although these posts were of little strategic significance, and required substantial amounts of artillery fire and air power to keep tribesmen at bay, they were politically impossible to abandon. The spectacular scenery, and the tragically heroic narrative that could be constructed from the experiences of

any of these garrisons, was a documentary maker's dream. Tim Hetherington's *Restrepo*, the story of the gallant defense of a fire base on the Korengal Valley, was broadcast in June 2010, the same month McChrystal was dismissed by Obama, and provided a framework into which millions of Americans and British placed the news they heard from Afghanistan. A few months later the *Battle of Marjah*, mentioned earlier, although portraying a very different part of Afghanistan, seemed to suggest that the battle was equally hopeless. Thereafter there came a steady stream of documentaries, the UK's Channel Four's *Our War: The Ten Year War in Afghanistan* (2011–12), Ben Anderson's *This Is What Winning Looks Like* (May 2013), and *Korengal* (May 2014), the latter a compilation of unused footage from *Restrepo*, produced as a tribute to Tim Hetherington, who had been killed three years earlier covering the war in Syria. The overall effect of these documentaries was best summed up by Ben Anderson in the conclusion of *This Is What Winning Looks Like*: "All is now about getting out and saving face. We're not leaving because we achieved our goals. We're leaving because we've given up on achieving these goals."

From the summer of 2010 it became difficult to find anything but negative reporting in the Anglo-American press. Much had been expected of the Obama surge and the introduction of the "new" counterinsurgency policy, but McChrystal's reference to Marjah as "a bleeding ulcer" and his subsequent dismissal by Obama was the signal for a sustained assault on the counterinsurgency policy. One of the most devastating critiques came from Eikenberry in an article in the widely respected journal, *Foreign Affairs* in the autumn of 2013, in which he denounced COIN as utterly misconceived. He declared COIN a "semi-colonial" policy that had alienated Karzai and his administration, and which was both "breathtakingly expansive and expensive." American commanders, "intellectually arrogant and cognitively rigid," had so overused the term they had "become almost a parody of faithful Red Guards chanting Maoist slogans during the Cultural Revolution." In their arrogance U.S. military leaders had insisted that there was no alternative to "simultaneously improving Afghanistan's security, governance, judicial system, economy, educational standards, health care delivery, and more." Eikenberry was particularly scandalized by the provision of the eight generators to Kandahar, at a cost of $225 million, an enormously expensive macro-economic project in pursuit of some "vaguely defined COIN effects." The adoption of COIN policy had led the United States into strategic overreach, a point Eikenberry emphasized by quoting Sun Tzu: "There has never been a protracted war from which a country has benefited."[44]

An important aspect of COIN operations concerns the management of perceptions. It was quite clear that both the Haqqani network and the Quetta Shura had a more effective system for messaging than ISAF, where the organization tended to be overly bureaucratic and reactive.

Indeed, so great was the fear of negative publicity that on occasions quite junior media officers alienated respected international correspondents, resulting in stories that were at best lukewarm.[45]

The perception of inevitable collapse and defeat did much to hamper the work of the High Peace Council. This organization, established as the result of a Peace Jirga, a meeting of tribal leaders from all over Afghanistan held in Kabul in June 2010, was designed to reach out to various Taliban leaders and facilitate the process of reconciliation, if not reintegration. But if one side sensed it was winning, there was little incentive to negotiate, and most efforts proved to be fruitless.

To people who had served in Afghanistan over the last four years, the most frustrating thing was that all the evidence pointed to the fact that the COIN campaign of 2010 actually worked. By the summer of 2014 not a single district center, let alone a provincial capital, was under Taliban control. It was true that operating from their sanctuaries across the border with Pakistan they could launch terrorist attacks that were sometimes spectacular, but these were as much a symptom of weakness as of strength. Insurgencies that control territory, and can command the loyalty of an entire population, do not have to conduct suicide bombings and assassinations.

By the last week of June 2014 there was fighting in parts of Kandahar and Helmand, where the Ishaqzai, with the support of foreign fighters from Pakistan and some Arab states, were attempting to regain control of Sangin, Kajaki, Nowzad, and Musa Quala. The performance of the Afghan National Security Forces exceeded all expectations. Fighting without Coalition air support, they inflicted more than 400 casualties on battalion-strength insurgent forces, so that by early July not a single district center had fallen. Throughout much of the rest of the country, the situation was stable, and the Taliban had little or no support. This was particularly true of Kabul and the Kabul valley, home to some 5.5 million Afghans, about one in six of the population. Kabul was a city of traffic jams, supermarkets, gymnasiums, and huge wedding halls. It was also a city whose people hunger for education, with private universities and colleges proliferating at what seems like every intersection. It was a city with 34 television channels, with radio stations dedicated to rock music, with the Internet, and where every citizen had a cell phone. The two million people who live in Kandahar and its surrounding districts were similarly circumstanced, as were another million or so who live in Mazar-e Sharif and Herat.

One might have expected a degree of security in the cities, where terrorist attacks enraged and disgusted the population rather than intimidated them, but the majority of rural areas were also secure. This situation had always existed in places such as Bamiyan and the Panjshir Valley, but it

was equally true of south-central Helmand, the area of Lashkar Gah, Nade Ali, and Marjah, once the scene of some very heavy fighting, but which had now become a refuge for people fleeing the depredations of the Ishaqzai in the north of the province.

The assertion that COIN died in 2010 betrayed a misunderstanding of what COIN actually entailed. It was true that a particular manifestation of COIN, which was synonymous with nation-building, still anathema to many Americans, had come to an end in many areas. But COIN was about influencing populations, an activity that can take many forms, not just the construction of hugely expensive generator plants. When Petraeus and his team studied earlier counterinsurgency campaigns, particularly the British in Malaya, they were misled to a certain extent by the British propaganda of the time that deliberately underplayed the purely military aspects of COIN, while overemphasizing those aspects that were synonymous with nation-building. In fact, counterterror operations were hugely important in smashing the communist insurgency in Malaya—something every veteran knew, but rarely articulated, so great was the public perception that the British had discovered a way of defeating an insurgency by being nice to people. A generation later, British veterans of the "troubles" in Northern Ireland often compared their own experiences of a sometimes nasty counterterror war to what they imagined had been the situation in Malaya 30 years earlier, and lamented their own fall from a state of military grace.

Counterterror operations had always been a feature of ISAF's campaign, but with McChrystal's departure and Petraeus's arrival, night raids, Special Forces operations, and drone strikes began to increase dramatically. The change of policy was roundly condemned in many quarters, not least by President Karzai, who frequently called for an end to such attacks, as a means of distancing himself from a program that was killing a significant number of people, not all of them insurgents. Within Kabul's diplomatic community there was support for the Karzai's position, most spectacularly so by the British representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, who resigned his position and returned to Britain, where he denounced the counterterror policy as "murder on an industrial scale."[46]

Sir Sherard and other diplomats deplored the fact that entire tranches of the Taliban leadership were being killed, men with whom they believed they could negotiate, though the lack of success attending the efforts of the High Peace Council indicated a degree of wishful thinking in this regard. They also deplored their replacement by an ever younger and more radicalized generation, who were more prepared to commit atrocities in the name of their religion. To ISAF high command their behavior was not entirely an unwelcome development. Increasingly fanatical, inexperienced, and ill-educated, these young men proceeded to alienate the

very people whose support they wished to gain. This process had already been witnessed five years earlier in Al Anbar, where the depredations of al Qaeda had progressively alienated the Sunni tribes, and now it was happening again in parts of Helmand and Kandahar.

In tandem with the counterterror campaign, the size of the Afghan National Security Forces was steadily increased, and training programs reinforced. The Afghan army's Officer Candidate School on the eastern outskirts of Kabul had been training platoon commanders since 2004. In 2009 the first batch of academically well-educated officers were commissioned at the National Military Academy of Afghanistan, an institution based on West Point, and in July 2012 Britain's prime minister signed a memorandum of understanding with President Karzai, undertaking to construct yet another academy, this one based on Sandhurst.

The Taliban attempted to disrupt the surge in training missions by instigating a series of "insider attacks," known colloquially as green-on-blue incidents, as mentioned earlier. ISAF's response was to put in place a variety of force protection measures, including the deployment of armed soldiers with each training mission, known as "Guardian Angels." The Taliban's tactics achieved a degree of success initially, but increasingly effective background checks, supplemented by biometric registration, significantly reduced the danger. There were still occasional green-on-blue incidents, but these were usually caused by personal disputes boiling out of control. There were an increasing number of ISAF personnel who wished to dispense with the force protection measures entirely, arguing that the best form of protection was to integrate as closely with the Afghans as possible, a policy followed by the Soviets in the 1980s, when they had suffered only two "insider attacks" in the entire campaign.[47] Western governments, however, fearing that their populations had a very low tolerance for casualties of this sort, were prepared to sacrifice a degree of operational effectiveness in order to prevent further erosion of an increasingly fragile national "will."

THE ELECTIONS OF 2014

By 2013 the ANSF had grown to about 350,000 personnel. That summer when the ANSF became responsible for security throughout Afghanistan, the Taliban launched a series of attacks, which ANSF weathered well. A handful of isolated forward operating bases were overrun, but were quickly recaptured, and the Taliban's much publicized boasts to take over district centers and even provincial capitals failed to materialize.[48] Even greater success was to follow in the spring of 2014, when the ANSF prevented any major Taliban disruption of the national elections, in which nearly seven million voted, including more than three million women, a

turnout of about 60 percent of the electorate, which was more than twice the number that had voted in 2009. More impressive still were the 105,000 who voted in Helmand, more than three times the number that had voted five years earlier. Early on polling day, April 5, the streets of Lashkar Gah filled up with men who marched through the streets singing the Afghan national anthem, holding up Taliban night letters that threatened death if they voted with their left hands, while they extended the ink-stained index fingers of their right hands to indicate that they had defied the insurgents.[49]

Humiliated by the huge turnout, the Taliban reorganized, appointed new commanders, and announced their intention to disrupt the runoff election, made necessary because neither of the leading candidates had achieved an overall majority, which was scheduled for June 14. Already very tired from their protracted periods on duty, the ANSF had to face yet another period without leave, followed by the certain knowledge that some of them would come under attack, and that some would die. This time the Taliban were much more active, in one incident stopping a busload of elders outside of Herat, and cutting off the index fingers of more than 20 who were carrying voter registration cards. Widely reported on national television, this incident had quite the reverse effect to that the Taliban intended. On election day, the white-bearded elders were filmed voting, the bandaged stumps of their index fingers next to their ink stained forefingers. One old man growled into the camera: "They can cut off all my fingers—I'm still going to vote—come on—come out and vote—show these cowards they can't frighten us!" And the Afghans voted, this time more than seven million, with increased votes in Helmand and Kandahar.

The following day one young Afghan, a university lecturer, appalled to find that the Western press had either ignored or relegated the news of his country's elections to the back pages, sent a blog to the *Huffington Post*, which was placed on the front pages of both the American and British editions. He asked the Anglo-Americans if they had become so used to defeat they no longer recognized a victory when one stared them in the face. What did victory look like? Victory was when more than seven million Afghans were able to defy the Taliban, thanks to the fact that the ANSF was strong enough to provide the population with protection. He finished with an impassioned appeal to President Obama not to pull out entirely in December 2016, which might mean throwing away yet another victory.[50]

The young Afghan's blog stuck in the craw of many of the campaign's critics, but he was right. A combination of classic counterinsurgency and counterterror operations, combined with the raising of large and moderately efficient indigenous forces, had created a situation in which something approaching democratic elections could take place, which ensured a peaceful change of government. Afghanistan no longer needed large numbers of Coalition soldiers, but it did require a residual force of perhaps 10,000 to conduct training missions, and to ensure the maintenance

of high technology equipment until the Afghans themselves were ready to assume this role. The Taliban continued their terror attacks, which served to alienate the population even further, and attempted to take district centers in the south, in an attempt to reassert some credibility, left at an all-time low by their inability to disrupt the elections of 2014. Humiliated by these failures, the time when there was a possibility that Taliban convoys would once more drive through the center of Kabul was long past. This was not to say that there were not dangers ahead. There was still the possibility, fortunately increasingly unlikely, that the army could split on tribal and ethnic lines and the country descend into civil war, but the dreadful fate that overwhelmed Iraq served to concentrate minds in this regard. The one thing that would not happen was that Afghanistan would once more fall to a Taliban insurgency, even one with the full backing of Pakistan's ISI. The Afghan security forces were now too strong and were supported by a political system that was proving to be surprisingly robust. In certain aspects it resembled that of the United States, not in normative sense, but in the way political machines like those of Cook County or Tammany Hal had, historically, actually wheeled and dealt. As in parts of the United States, in Afghanistan city bosses controlling substantial parts of the economy negotiated with so-called war-lords who could deliver the votes of particular ethnic blocs, to construct a coalition that would represent most interest groups. The deals were struck in shuras rather than in "smoke-filled rooms," but the end result was the same, the gradual emergence of a government that had a fair chance of functioning. Skilful diplomacy and an Afghan foreign minister who could balance the interests of Pakistan against those of Iran, India, the Central Asian states, and China would do the rest. In answer to the question Ben Anderson asked in his documentary, this is what was meant by "winning." It was not perfect, but it was very far from a defeat.

NOTES

1. Tim Bird and Alex Marshall, *Afghanistan: How the West Lost Its Way* (London: Yale University Press, 2011); Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, *Cables from Kabul: The Inside Story of the West's Afghanistan Campaign* (London: Harper, 2011); Vanda Felbab-Brown and Bruce Riedel, *Aspiration and Ambivalence: Strategies and Realities of Counterinsurgency and State-Building in Afghanistan* (New York: Brookings Institution Press, 2012); Frank Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan* (London, Yale, 2011).

2. Carter Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier* (London: Hurst, 2013); Mike Martin, *An Intimate War: An Oral History of the Helmand Conflict* (London: Hurst, 2014); Astri Suhrke, *When More Is Less: The International Project in Afghanistan* (London: Hurst, 2011).

3. Bird and Marshall, *How the West Lost Its Way*, 243.

4. Colonel H. R. McMaster had conducted a successful counterinsurgency operation in Tel Afar in 2005. The following year Colonel Sean MacFarland achieved an even greater success in Ramadi, which led to the Al Anbar "Awakening." It was the success of these operations that led General Jack Keane, the retired but still hugely influential vice chief of staff of the U.S. Army to convince President Bush to authorize the surge of American forces in Iraq. The author of this chapter was attached to McFarland's headquarters in Ramadi during the summer of 2006. Interview with General Jack Keane, November 2010.

5. Between June 2007 and June 2014 I conducted more than 60 interviews with American, British, and Afghan personnel. I have cited the British, Americans, and senior Afghan interviewees, but have withheld the identity of junior Afghan personnel, not wishing to expose them unnecessarily to the possibility of attack.

6. The most detailed account of 1 Royal Anglian's operations in Afghanistan in 2007 is Richard Kemp, *Attack State Red* (London: Penguin, 2009).

7. Interviews conducted in Sangin June–July 2007 with Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Carver, Major Mick Aston; Major Dominic Biddick, Lieutenant Graham Goodey, Lieutenant Nick Denning, Lieutenant Bjorn Rose, 1 Royal Anglian Regiment; Captain Kathy Freeman, Royal Engineers (acting intelligence officer, 1 Royal Anglian).

8. Anthony King, "Understanding the Helmand Campaign," *International Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2010): 311–32.

9. Personal knowledge.

10. Interviews conducted in Nad-e Ali District July–August 2012: District Governor Habibullah; Andy Venus, head, Provisional Reconstruction Team (PRT); John Moffatt, deputy head, PRT; Lieutenant Colonel Mick Aston, Major Bev Allen, Major Graham Goodey, Captain Nick Denning, Lieutenant Ben Thompson, 1 Royal Anglian; Major Naim Moukarzel, Lieutenant Alex Budge, Welsh Guards, Sergeant Bradley Ricks, Light Dragoons.

11. "Remarks by the President on a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan," White House Press Release, March 27, 2009.

12. A heavily edited account of the Eikenberry–McChrystal relationship can be found in Karl W. Eikenberry, "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan: The Other Side of the COIN," *Foreign Affairs* (September–October 2013).

13. "United States Integrated Civilian–Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan."

14. Major General Michael T. Flynn, Captain Matt USMC Pottinger, and Paul D DIA Batchelor, "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan" (Centre for a New American Security, January 2010), accessed March 5, 2014.

15. Interview with Captain Mike Martin, Sandhurst, 2011.

16. Interview with Colonel Roly Walker, Major Richard Green, Grenadier Guards, London, 2011. Interview with Sergeant Major Boek, Grenadier Guards, Qargha, Kabul, 2014.

17. Walker interview.

18. Walker interview.

19. Green interview.

20. Interview with Major Graham Goodey, Sandhurst, 2011.

21. Walker interview.
22. Green interview.
23. Interviews with General Nick Carter, Warminster, 2011, Brigadier James Cowan, London, 2011, District Governor Habibullah, Shawqat, 2012.
24. Interview with Captain Richard Jakeman, London, 2011.
25. Jakeman interview.
26. HBO Documentary: *The Battle of Marjah*, broadcast February 15, 2011.
27. Carter interview; Cowan interview; Martin interview.
28. Martin interview.
29. Habibullah interview; John Moffat interview; Shawqat, August 2012.
30. Martin Interview; "Operation Moshtarak" ISAF Joint Command Press Release, February 13, 2010, accessed May 5, 2014.
31. Carter interview; Cowan interview.
32. A large number of the U.S. Marines who conducted the assault were veterans of the Ramadi battle of 2006.
33. Dion Nissenbaum, "Afghan Town a Bleeding Ulcer," McClatchy News Service, May 24, 2010, accessed April 5, 2014.
34. Interview with Afghan interpreters deployed with USMC in Marjah operation (names withheld), Qargha, 2014.
35. Carl Forsberg, "Counterinsurgency in Kandahar: Evaluating the 2010 Hamkari Campaign," *Afghanistan Report 7* Institute for the Study of War, December 2010, accessed March 10, 2014.
36. Interview with Dr. Carter Malkasian, ISAF HQ, Kabul, July 2013.
37. Malkasian interview.
38. Forsberg, "Counterinsurgency in Kandahar," 47.
39. Forsberg, "Counterinsurgency in Kandahar," 29–31.
40. Ibid. Interview with General Sher Mohammad Karimi, chief of staff, ANA, Kabul, April 2013.
41. Forsberg, "Counterinsurgency in Kandahar," 34–35; Karimi interview; interview with Abdul Rahim Wardak, Afghan minister of defense (2004–12), Kabul, April 2014.
42. Forsberg, "Counterinsurgency in Kandahar," 43.
43. Malkasian interview.
44. Karl W. Eikenberry, "The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine on Afghanistan: The Other Side of the COIN," *Foreign Affairs* (September–October 2013), accessed March 5, 2014.
45. For example, Christina Lamb, *The Sunday Times* (London), February 16, 2014.
46. Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, Statement made by Sir Sherard at "Changing Character of War" seminar, All Souls College, Oxford, March 2011.
47. Artemy Kalinovsky, "The Blind Leading the Blind: Soviet Advisors, Counter-Insurgency and Nation-Building in Afghanistan," Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, January 2010, 15–16.
48. Karimi interview.
49. Interviews with Afghan National Army officers deployed to Helmand for election period (names withheld), April 20–22, 2014, Qargha.
50. *Huffington Post*: blog by Mohammad Subhan, June 14, 2014.

CHAPTER 15

The Future of Counterinsurgency?: The Crisis of Classical Theories

Paul Dixon

INTRODUCTION

Since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 counterinsurgency (COIN) has enjoyed a revival.[1] The conventional wars in Afghanistan and Iraq turned into insurgencies or "wars amongst the people."[2] Those in the U.S. military who advocated a conventional warfare or barbaric counterinsurgency approach (the Contras) were marginalized by those, most prominently General David Petraeus, advocating a neoclassical, the so-called hearts and minds approach, to counterinsurgency, drawing on the West's classical imperial experience (the COINdinistas). The proponents of the neoclassical approach claimed success in Iraq as a result of their *population-centric* approach and *the surge* that led to a subsequent decline in violence. They then attempted to apply their neoclassical approach to Afghanistan but with little apparent success. It is argued that the COINdinistas then rejected neoclassical counterinsurgency in favor of counterterrorism, which was less ambitious, more enemy-centric, and coercive.

Counterinsurgency theory has failed to provide a road map to success in Iraq and Afghanistan and has drawn considerable criticism from a diverse range of perspectives. This chapter describes the evolution, contradictions, and criticisms of counterinsurgency theory—classical, neoclassical, and postclassical—in order to consider the future of counterinsurgency theorizing. It will be argued that counterinsurgency theory is not scientific, objective, and neutral but is the product of powerful

interests, particularly within the military. This body of theory has been too simplistic in its diagnosis and prescriptions for conflict and this has encouraged the resort to war by encouraging the belief that crude, universal theories and prescriptions can resolve complex and diverse conflicts.

FROM CLASSICAL TO NEOCLASSICAL COIN

The classical model of counterinsurgency was a universal theory aimed at winning the "battle" against insurgents for the "hearts and minds" of the local population.[3] The classical model of counterinsurgency was derived from Britain and France's colonial experience and the writings of soldiers and administrators with counterinsurgency experience such as Robert Thompson (Malaya, Vietnam), Robert Trinquier, David Galula (Algeria), and Frank Kitson (Kenya, Malaya, Cyprus, Oman, Northern Ireland). Classical counterinsurgency is ambiguous and may be interpreted in very divergent ways. It is defined here as comprising four interrelated requirements:

1. *Political Will: The Key to Victory.* Classical counterinsurgency doctrine emphasized the importance of politics in defeating insurgents. General Templer, who was seen as the victor in Malaya, argued that counterinsurgency was 25 percent shooting and 75 percent winning over the people. From his Algerian experience, David Galula estimated that the division was "80 percent political, 20 percent military." If the insurgents won the battle for the hearts and minds of the local population then the state would be defeated. In order to win the state needed to demonstrate political will and determination so that the great mass of people, who were assumed to be neutral between the insurgents and state, would swing behind the counterinsurgency. Negotiations and conciliation, on the other hand, could undermine the state's credibility and image of determination.
2. *Winning Hearts and Minds.* Political will is necessary to win the hearts and minds of the affected population. There are three ways that support can be drawn away from the insurgents' cause:
   - First, good government and state-building delivers material benefits to the local population and in return gains the support of the people.
   - Second, propaganda and public relations are deployed to persuade the population to support the government and undermine support for the insurgents. This propaganda can range from *black* or deceptive operations to *white* and truthful operations.
   - Third, *minimum force* is used by the military to avoid alienating the local population.
3. *Police Primacy.* The local police are likely to be more appropriate than the military in defeating insurgents. This is because they are permanent, have local knowledge, and likely to be sensitive in winning over the hearts and minds of the local population. Police primacy also gave the impression that the

insurgents were criminals, whereas the deployment of the military might suggest that insurgents may be combatants and even had some popular legitimacy. The Vietnamization or Ulsterization of conflicts may also reduce the deaths of soldiers and the pressure of domestic public and media opinion for withdrawal.

4. *Coordination*. The counterinsurgency campaign needed to coordinate the political, social, economic, psychological, and military effort to defeat the insurgency either under military or civilian leadership.

The classical, hearts and minds model of counterinsurgency is open to highly divergent interpretations. This ambiguity is useful in winning political support from the Right, who prefer a conservative realist or neoconservative interpretation of counterinsurgency, and some on the Left, who prefer a more liberal idealist interpretation. A liberal idealist interpretation suggests that the classical model is compatible with humanitarian war and respect for human rights. But this relies on a sanitized view of the history of the counterinsurgency campaigns of imperialist powers. This perspective justifies the use of force as an effective instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights in Iraq and Afghanistan.

An aggressive *conservative realist* interpretation of the hearts and minds model accepts that the success enjoyed by classical counterinsurgency during the European powers' retreat from their empires was more often the result of barbarism and the use of coercion and fear rather than winning over the hearts and minds of the local population. As David French argues, where the British won counterinsurgencies between 1945 and 1967, "they did so by being nasty, not nice, to the people."[4] The phrases *hearts and minds* and *minimum force* are most usually associated with the British campaign in Malaya, which included the forcible movement of 500,000 people; mass arrests; the death penalty; detention without trial; deportations; control of food; identity cards; arson against communist sympathizers; censorship; collective punishments (curfews and fines); and indiscriminate shooting of Chinese squatters.[5] The French in Algeria also engaged in mass abuses of human rights and employed systematic torture. Colin Gray argues:

> The winning of "hearts and minds" may be a superior approach to quelling irregulars, but official, or extra-official but officially condoned, military and police terror is swifter and can be effective. The proposition that repression never succeeds is, unfortunately, a myth. Half-hearted repression conducted by self-doubting persons of liberal conscience certainly does not work. That will be as true in the future as it was in the past.[6]

The conservative realist interpretation is also highly skeptical of negotiations as a means for ending an insurgency; there is a tendency to argue that negotiations should only be initiated either when the insurgents have been "defeated" or else from a position of "overwhelming strength."[7]

The implication of the conservative realist interpretation is that it was the barbaric approach to counterinsurgency that led to success in colonial counterinsurgencies and that this is necessary to defeat insurgencies in Iraq or Afghanistan. Yet realists recognize that the public advocacy of such (usually unspecified) coercive measures can be politically unacceptable in Western democracies or to world opinion (although the public backlash against drone strikes and kill/capture raids has been limited). This leads advocates of a conventional warfare or barbaric counterinsurgency approach to be hostile to democracy because democracy—including free speech, party and political debate, dissent and protest, an uncensored media, and the accountability of the armed forces—is seen as undermining the effort to defeat the insurgents. *Liberal realists*, by contrast, argue that serious abuses of human rights are inevitable in counterinsurgencies and urge states to be cautious about undertaking such wars unless they are strictly necessary.

The British did not send troops to Vietnam but they did send the British Advisory Mission to Vietnam in 1961–65 to help the U.S. military draw the lessons from Malaya for their war against the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese. The British were concerned that the United States was fighting a conventional war rather than a counterinsurgency campaign for the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. There was a debate within the U.S. military between those advocating counterinsurgency and others who favored the overwhelming force used in conventional warfare. Although the U.S. military adopted the hearts and minds viewpoint, this concealed the reality of a far more conventional and coercive approach. The U.S. defeat in Vietnam led to an aversion to counterinsurgency within the U.S. military.

In the post–Cold War world counterinsurgency could be reinvented as humanitarian *peace enforcement*. In the former Yugoslavia international forces were deployed as *peacekeepers* rather than combatants. This drew criticism of their limited rules of engagement and arguments from humanitarians for more "robust" action against military and paramilitary abusers of human rights and participants in mass murder. Peacekeeping had the consent of the conflicting parties, but peace enforcement did not; it implied more permissive rules of engagement and greater force. Peace enforcement ran the risk of escalation of the conflict into war between international and local forces, which Western powers and their public were reluctant to contemplate. Notably, NATO's bombing of the Serbs occurred only after NATO peacekeepers had been consolidated to more defensible positions. President Clinton, under the constraint of the *Vietnam syndrome*, was probably more enthusiastic about using airpower against the Serbs, in Bosnia and Kosovo, because there was no risk to U.S. military personnel on the ground. Humanitarian war legitimized counterinsurgency as peace enforcement with the implication that just

wars could be fought in the service of development, democracy, and human rights.

The 9/11 attack on the United States and the evolution of a powerful discourse around globalization, emphasizing the growing interconnectedness of the world, were combined in neoclassical global counterinsurgency theorizing. Global Insurgency means that the war must be fought at home as well as abroad; domestic public opinion could influence and even determine the campaign. John Mackinlay in *The Insurgent Archipelago* (2009) emphasizes the transformations brought about by changes in transport technology; the proliferation of cheap and powerful communications; economic deregulation; and cultural change. The combination of migration and communications had created advantages for insurgents by allowing the potential enemy within the state and also creating an anarchic media environment that favored the insurgents. Western counterinsurgency doctrine had failed to adapt to the globalized world, although Mackinlay's prescriptions of political, economic, and social reform and coordination echo classical doctrine. He also advocated engagement and negotiations with insurgents.

By contrast a neoconservative approach to global counterinsurgency criticized neoclassical thinking for its reliance on a postmodern version of the Malaya campaign, with its *grievance-settling approach*. Reformism and negotiations are amoral for neoconservatives, because they smack of appeasement and give Islamists a degree of legitimacy. David Jones and M. L. R. Smith emphasize the importance of winning the political battle of ideas and world view and this "crucial struggle" will take place in the "domestic context" and not the global sphere. This involves a "battle of wills" to maintain liberal and pluralistic societies against "Islamists" and multi-culturalists who would undermine these values.[8]

The invasion of Iraq 2003 was followed by an insurgency. The United States initially employed conventional warfare tactics most notoriously in the case of Fallujah. This drew international criticism, including from close allies such as the U.K. A faction within the U.S. military grouped around General David Petraeus—the COINdinistas—advocated the importance of relearning the lessons of classical counterinsurgency for a neoclassical approach to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.[9] The French counterinsurgency expert David Galula's book *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (1964) was influential but so too was the British experience. U.S. Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl's *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (2002) favorably contrasted Britain's counterinsurgency success in Malaya with the U.S. failure in Vietnam. Britain's success in Northern Ireland appeared to reinforce the effectiveness of the British approach. David Kilcullen, an Australian counterinsurgency expert and adviser to U.S. secretary of state Condoleeza Rice and General Petraeus, was also an influential exponent of the counterinsurgency approach.[10]

The triumph of the COINdinistas in winning over the U.S. military to counterinsurgency was reflected in the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Field Manual, FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, published in December 2006.[11] The *Anbar Awakening*, which led to Sunni insurgents turning against al Qaeda, created the political space for the surge of 30,000 U.S. troops into Iraq. David Kilcullen argued, "In practice, security did not prompt reconciliation: on the contrary, security followed and resulted from reconciliation."[12] A decline in violence followed the awakening and the surge allowing neoconservative and military advocates of the neoclassical approach to declare victory for counterinsurgency.[13] The dominance of the neoclassical approach was sealed by the appointment of General Petraeus as commander of U.S. Central Command (2008–10), which covered Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. In June 2009, General Stanley McChrystal was chosen to command U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan and implement neoclassical counterinsurgency.

POSTCLASSICAL COIN OR COUNTER-TERRORISM?

The evolution of neoclassical COIN into postclassical COIN is closely related to developments in U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and the debate between advocates of counterinsurgency and champions of a more limited counterterrorism approach. Generals Petraeus and McChrystal, allied with the secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, wanted the newly elected President Obama to authorize the deployment of 40,000 troops to implement an Iraq-style surge into Afghanistan—in spite of the absence of an awakening—and to engage in a textbook counterinsurgency strategy.[14] This entailed the deployment of large numbers of U.S. troops in Afghanistan for a long period of time—it was estimated that on average counterinsurgencies took 10 to 15 years to achieve "victory" and counterinsurgency had only been applied from 2008 not 2001.[15] Such a population-centric strategy was directed at winning the support of the Afghan people away from the Taliban. It would entail the more restricted use of force to win hearts and minds and, it was assumed, a higher risk to U.S. military personnel. There was a high financial cost to these proposals because of the large numbers of troops involved and also the attempt to build up the Afghan state. The political relationship with President Karzai would be important in winning over the support of the population.

The vice president, Joe Biden, argued that a full counterinsurgency campaign was politically unsustainable and preferred a more limited counter-terrorism strategy.[16] This would be less financially costly and involve a lighter footprint for the U.S. military and focus on al Qaeda by employing Special Operations kill/capture missions, drone strikes, and bombing raids. There would be less of a need to build close relationships

Table 15.1.

"Neoclassical" Counterinsurgency Contrasted with Counterterrorism

	Neoclassical Counterinsurgency	Counterterrorism
Champions	Petraeus, COINdinistas, Hillary Clinton	Vice President Biden, some generals allied with Obama (Eikenberry, Jones, Lute)
Enemy	Taliban and al Qaeda	al Qaeda (less so the Taliban)
Focus	Population-centric. Troops among the people, protect population, local knowledge, occupation, the surge	Enemy-centric. Special operations, drone strikes, kill/capture, covert operations, assassination
Risk to U.S. military personnel	Higher. Large numbers of troops, high cost	More limited risk. Limited troops, limited footprint, paves the way to withdrawal
Time	Long war: 10–15 years after 2008	Limited war: How does this end?
Ambition	Victory through "long war": Nation/state building, occupation (imperial?)	More limited goals, withdrawal, limited reform
Focus	Afghanistan: Partnership with state; therefore root out corruption	Pakistan, AF-PAK: Limited, illegitimate partner
Economics	High economic cost	More limited economic cost
Politics	Requirement for politicians to play their role; tension over economic and political cost	More politically acceptable to public opinion; limited economic, military, and political cost
Criticisms	Lack of political and public support for costly and long campaign; over-optimism; Vietnam-style quagmire	High levels of force alienate the population and lose hearts and minds; leaves Afghanistan as potential base for terrorism

with President Karzai's corrupt government or strengthen the Afghan state. It also provided cover for a withdrawal from Afghanistan. David Kilcullen argues that the U.S. approach in Afghanistan represents a shift from "Neoclassical" to "Postclassical" counterinsurgency, as shown in Table 15.1.

President Obama came under intense pressure from the military for an ambitious, "long war," counterinsurgency strategy but he believed that the U.S. public would only tolerate two more years of war and that he

could not be seen to lose.[17] The U.S. president developed a strategy that straddled both counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism. He proposed that the military be given a surge of 30,000 U.S. troops (along with 3,000 enablers and 7,000 troops from NATO allies) in order to attempt a counterinsurgency approach. Importantly, this was to be a *time-limited* counterinsurgency and local security forces were to be built up to allow the beginning of the withdrawal of U.S. forces in July 2011. There was also to be a civilian and diplomatic effort to bolster the counterinsurgency effort and reach a political settlement. President Obama's ambition was restricted, however, to disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda rather than defeating the Taliban and creating a democratic state. The advocates of COIN, including General Petraeus, agreed to clear areas of the Taliban, hold them, and transfer them to Afghan control within 18 months.[18] Some COINdinistas argued that a successful counterinsurgency strategy could not work within such a short period of time; setting a date for withdrawal undermined the political will on which a successful COIN operation had to be based and also damaged the U.S. position in any future negotiations with the Taliban.

General McChrystal introduced a neoclassical COIN strategy to replace the backfiring, enemy-centric, conventional warfare approach of the previous eight years that had alienated the Afghan population. McChrystal had organized a "jaw-dropping counter-terrorism campaign" in Iraq but tactical success had not resulted in strategic victory.[19] In his "initial assessment," McChrystal argued that ISAF was "a conventional force that is poorly configured for COIN":

> Pre-occupied with protection of our own forces, we have operated in a manner that distances us—physically and psychologically—from the people we seek to protect. In addition, we run the risk of strategic defeat by pursuing tactical wins that cause civilian casualties or unnecessary collateral damage. The insurgents cannot defeat us militarily; but we can defeat ourselves.[20]

McChrystal emphasized the importance of limiting civilian casualties and collateral damage that were due to an overreliance on firepower and force protection. The U.S. general initiated the doctrine of *courageous restraint*, which involved more restricted rules of engagement and meant the military taking on increased risks to itself in order to reduce the risk to civilians. He also gained control of Special Forces raids that were also causing civilian casualties. The doctrine of courageous restraint was abandoned in the teeth of resistance from soldiers, politicians, the media, and domestic public opinion.[21]

In June 2010 General Petraeus was appointed to replace McChrystal as commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and was under pressure to "show fast results in improving security." This led to a shift from

neoclassical counterinsurgency toward a more enemy-centric counterterrorism campaign focused on killing or capturing the enemy in the hope that this would produce results, pressure the Taliban into negotiations, and might delay withdrawal.[22] General Petraeus ended McChrystal's policy of courageous restraint and the military allied itself with "unsavoury warlords." There was a major increase in bombing missions, night raids, and Special Forces so-called kill-or-capture missions against suspected Taliban leaders. Some reports suggested over 80 percent of those captured were found to be innocent civilians and that a quarter or more of those killed by U.S. drones since 2004 were innocent civilians.[23] A study by Stanford and New York universities found that drone killings in Pakistan were politically counterproductive, killed large numbers of civilians, and undermined respect for international law.[24] It was feared that drone strikes and kill/capture raids could undermine negotiations by killing Taliban leaders who might be amenable to a political settlement. There has been criticism of the United States for leaving it too late to negotiate with the Taliban because the announcement of withdrawal of NATO combat forces by 2014 weakens the West's hand in negotiating a political accommodation. In July 2011, General Petraeus left Afghanistan just as President Obama was declaring victory and beginning the process of withdrawal.[25] According to Kaplan, in 18 months the counterinsurgency strategy had not led to much hold or build. President Obama began to shift U.S. defense policy away from ambitious and costly counterinsurgency operations.[26]

David Kilcullen argues that the U.S. approach in Afghanistan represents a shift from neoclassical to postclassical counterinsurgency. Postclassical COIN is based "more on empiricism (a data-driven or evidence-based understanding of what is happening on the ground) rather than on appeal to the authority of historical cases, or exegesis from the classical canon of COIN theorists."[27] It would appear that the classic, imperial "lessons" of counterinsurgency deduced from the retreat from Empire are to be set aside in favor of a more inductive approach based on the circumstances and exigencies of ongoing U.S. military operations. The experience of Iraq on the development of postclassical COIN is strong. The surge of 2007 combined coercive and persuasive elements that was less counterinsurgency and more "civil war termination or heavy peace enforcement." *Irreconcilables* are killed or captured so that the reconcilables may negotiate. Kilcullen emphasizes the political rather than military aspects of the surge: "Ultimately the decisive aspect of the reconciliation strategy was the Awakening, a tribal revolt against AQI [al Qaeda International], which spread rapidly across the Sunni part of the country in 2007 and combined reconciliation and peacemaking with direct military action against irreconcilables and public safety in threatened communities." In Afghanistan, commanders have attempted to

dramatically accelerate COIN by combining a "highly kinetic counter-network targeting of irreconcilables, and a peace-building programme to win over any member of the insurgency who proved willing to reconcile."[28]

The postclassical approach is not a theory to be implemented but represents more an attempt to justify General Petraeus's *practice* in Iraq and Afghanistan. This postclassical approach appears to be a rejection of neoclassical counterinsurgency and a shift toward the counter-terrorist practice of Petraeus in Afghanistan, which increased levels of violence in the hope of bringing about some improvement in the security situation.

THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST PERSPECTIVE

The anti-imperialist perspective sees classical, neoclassical, and postclassical counterinsurgency as an illegitimate strategy to consolidate and extend the power of the Western imperial powers. Anti-imperialists are a diverse group; some are pacifists who oppose all wars. Others may be sympathizers with the insurgents who are seen as supporters of national liberation movements and anti-imperialists fighting for their freedom and way of life.[29] Anti-imperialists can take up positions between these poles: they may be skeptical of the military instrument in most cases but accept that in exceptional circumstances intervention may be justified. They may also be highly critical of the politics and brutality of insurgents.

The United States is seen as an imperialist power that seeks to consolidate and extend its political, cultural, and economic hegemony over the world through deception and a smokescreen of rhetoric about humanitarian intervention, and human rights. Counterinsurgency theorists conceal their imperial project behind claims of objectivity and technocratic jargon. Ironically, left-wing anti-imperialists agree with conservative realists about the brutal reality of counterinsurgency campaigns. Conservative realists believe brutality is necessary in order to defeat insurgents, whereas anti-imperialists condemn the brutality as an abuse of human rights including the right of self-determination. Anti-imperialists point to the history of U.S. imperialism including the suppression of national liberation movements, the undermining of democratically elected governments, and support for dictatorships. They tend to argue that it is imperialist interference that creates war and conflict within societies and that the withdrawal of the imperial power will lead to the end of conflict and the rise of democratic self-government rather than a bloodbath or, if there is a bloodbath, that this will be short-lived.

THE END OF COUNTERINSURGENCY?

The state of counterinsurgency theorizing has been outlined but some have questioned whether such theorizing is adequate to accurately

describe and prescribe for the range and diversity of conflicts to which it has been applied. This section describes six criticisms of counterinsurgency theorizing.

1. *The Positivist Bias of Counterinsurgency Theorizing*. Counterinsurgency theorizing reflects a positivist approach to knowledge in which the methods of the natural sciences (or a particular conception of those methods) are applied to the study of social reality. Positivism is often considered to include the following:
   a. An emphasis on observation in the development of knowledge.
   b. The generation of hypotheses and laws that can be tested.
   c. The accumulation of facts that provide the basis for laws.
   d. Science can and must be conducted in a value free way that is objective.
   e. There is a clear distinction between scientific and normative statements, accompanied by the belief that it is scientific statements that are the proper job of the scientist because normative statements cannot be confirmed by the senses.

   The influence of positivism on counterinsurgency theorizing leads to approaches that suggest that problems such as insurgencies can be solved in an objective, managerialist, and technocratic way using the application of science and free of the influence of values. Classical and neoclassical counterinsurgency theory claims to be universal and is underpinned by overgeneralized, rationalist, and materialist assumptions that suggest that insurgencies are amenable to materialist solutions. These theories suggest that a simple four-point formula—political will, winning hearts and minds, police primacy, and coordination—can be applied to any conflict categorized as an insurgency with the same "successful" outcome as, for example, Malaya and Northern Ireland. The assumption is that all these insurgencies are essentially the same and, therefore, amenable to the same prescriptions: what was successful in one situation must be successful in all.

   A number of criticisms can be made of the positivist bias of counterinsurgency thinking:
   a. *All theories have a political and moral perspective and knowledge is never neutral.* There are a range of possible ways that classical counterinsurgency theory can be interpreted, for example, over the degree of force that should be used. This debate reflects the different assumptions and values that those interpreters bring to the theory and the outcomes that they seek. There is no neutral or objective definition of what counterinsurgency is. Classic counterinsurgency theory was designed to help the colonial state defeat insurgents but does not consider whether the insurgents ought to be defeated. For example, it is a political judgment as to whether insurgents such as the French resistance in World War II, the U.S. revolutionary resistance to British rule, the ANC's fight against Apartheid in South Africa, and the Syrian or Libyan insurgencies against dictatorship should be defeated or supported. David Kilcullen reached the conclusion that his role as a technical specialist in the Bush administration was not politically

neutral and that he had an obligation to state his views on improving the conduct of the war but also on the war itself.[30] Kilcullen and senior British military officers argued that the mistake with the Iraq war was not with the counterinsurgency but with the decision to invade Iraq in the first place.

Counterinsurgency theorizing, because it embraces a positivist approach to knowledge, places little or no explicit emphasis on morality. Some argue that the "politically inconvenient truth" is that a "barbaric," coercive, and repressive approach to counterinsurgency is more successful than a "highly ideological and prescriptive," less coercive, "minimum force" approach.[31] These analysts often fail to recognize the inevitability of moral and political choices in counterinsurgency rather than attempting to conceal them behind the rhetoric of technocratic objectivity and the search for a theoretical formula or silver bullet that will quash any insurgency. The distinction between *what is* and *what ought to be* is artificial. Analysts bring their values and norms to their analysis and interpretation of conflict so that it is not possible to analyze conflict without using value-laden concepts. The world is not a morality tale in which moral behavior leads to the best outcome and immoral and repugnant behavior leads to the worst. Whether severe repression and coercion will destroy an insurgent organization or be counterproductive and therefore galvanize opposition to the state is difficult to predict. Advocates of barbaric counterinsurgency or conventional warfare are rarely specific about the combination of callous measures of coercion and repression—carpet bombing, chemical warfare, reprisals, massacre, torture, rape, starvation, deportation—they believe are successful. The particular cases that are designated successes for repression are not listed and justified. What success and victory means in war are highly contested terms that reveal the values of the observer. Repression may simply galvanize resistance rather than achieve pacification and stabilization and causation may be difficult to assess. Publicly acknowledging the effectiveness of repression in COIN operations is likely to be politically inconvenient to both NATO governments and their militaries in justifying COIN operations that are often claimed to be about preventing genocide and promoting democracy and human rights.

b. *Counterinsurgency Theory Is Socially Produced and Affected by Power.*
The idea of objectivity is undermined by observations that the generation of knowledge is affected by the insurgency industry and the social background of those who theorize about counterinsurgency. Steven Metz points to the rise of "an insurgency industry in the West, centred not only in militaries, government agencies and intelligence services, but also in segments of academia, journalism, research institutes and, to some extent, security-related corporations."[32]

This industry first appeared in the U.K. and France but after decolonization was dominated by the United States. "This industry shaped not only the way that states and their militaries undertook counterinsurgency, but also the way insurgency was understood in the academic world and among the wider public."[33] David Kilcullen has drawn attention to the dominance of Westerners in the development of classical counterinsurgency theory and the lack of ethnic and gender balance. The army has dominated

counterinsurgency thinking, and expertise in non-military measures was excluded.[34] David Ucko argues that "inadequate attention has been given to area studies, regional experts and anthropological data; instead much of the research is self-referential and inward looking."[35] The development of counterinsurgency thinking in the U.S. military is affected by political power and bureaucratic rivalry (COINdinistas against Contras). In addition, the postclassical approach claims to learn from the practice of counterinsurgency.[36]

c. *Universal Counterinsurgency Thinking?*
The categorization of a conflict as an insurgency leads to diverse conflicts, possibly with differing dynamics and motivations being categorized together and the same one size fits all solution applied to them all in the hope that if it worked in the past it might work again. David Kilcullen accepts that the selection of case studies, for example, affects the counterinsurgency lessons drawn:

> Given the heterogeneous categories within this new data, it becomes evident that a single unified counterinsurgency doctrine is not possible, that there can be no universal set of best practices evolved over time that can cover such diverse starting points, endstates and local contexts.[37]

This leads counterinsurgency theorists and their allies to be wildly overoptimistic about what counterinsurgency can achieve. When these efforts fail rhetorical escape hatches are created to allow COIN's advocates to claim that it was the failure to implement a comprehensive or fully resourced counterinsurgency operation that led to its failure. The oversimplified assumptions of counterinsurgency theorizing has led to an underestimation of the problems facing those who would counter an insurgency and, particularly, build a functioning democratic state that respects human rights.

Classical and neoclassical counterinsurgency thinking is heavily rationalist and materialist while neoconservatives portray insurgents as ideological fanatics who must be destroyed rather than conciliated. Critics suggest that insurgencies are more complex and diverse than this and there may be a range of material and ideological motivations behind an insurgency that are not necessarily amenable to simple material solutions. Insurgents have a range of motivations and their fundamentalist ideological rhetoric may actually belie their pragmatics and willingness to negotiate and reach accommodation. Individuals and groups may change their beliefs and behaviors over time, irreconcilables may become reconcilable and reconcilables may become more hardline. People may retain hardline and antagonistic beliefs but not act on them. Neoconservatives' Manichean view of the world leads them to insist on the victory of good and the defeat of evil and to ignore the subtleties of politics and the possibility of negotiated settlements.

2. *Counterinsurgency Implies the Possibility of a Humane Form of Warfare and This Increases the Likelihood of War.* Counterinsurgency theory (perhaps presented as *peacekeeping* or *peace enforcement*) has held out the possibility of a successful and humane type of warfare that uses minimum force to win the hearts and minds of the people, promote democracy, achieve humanitarian goals such as

the prevention of abuses of human rights, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The humanitarian rationale for war is combined with the optimism of counterinsurgency theorizing and the military's bureaucratic interests to overcome the political and public inhibitions about entering wars. This contrasts the severe problems democracies have in sustaining support during war, especially if it appears not to be going according to plan. The failure of counterinsurgency to achieve its stated goals in Iraq and Afghanistan has led to greater caution among politicians about the effectiveness of deploying force to resolve complex conflicts. The focus on military means may underestimate the possibility of politics and diplomacy in negotiating more satisfactory outcomes.

3. *The Gap between Theory and Practice: Interpreting Hearts and Minds*. Counterinsurgency theory tends not to acknowledge the human rights abuses that are carried out during counterinsurgency campaigns. This conceals the gap between the hearts and minds theory and public presentation of counterinsurgency.[38] Both conservative realists and anti-imperialists criticize counterinsurgency theory's failure to recognize the reality of horrific abuses in the colonial counterinsurgency campaigns that are supposed to be the model for current operations. Advocates of counterinsurgency may privately acknowledge the brutality of counterinsurgency campaigns but realize that this cannot be publicly acknowledged for fear of jeopardizing public support for war. This can undermine counterinsurgency theory as a guide to operations because the role of violence is not fully discussed. Counterinsurgency theory and doctrine may go unread or else the implementation of counterinsurgency is constrained by military culture—for example the problems of implementing a minimum force or courageous restraint approach to the use of violence. The veneration of the military also makes it difficult for the military to take risks to fight their wars justly and with courageous restraint.
4. *The Problem of Military Accountability*. Counterinsurgency theory prescribes the use of minimum force to win the hearts and minds of the local population. But minimum force is open to widely differing interpretations, some incompatible with the rule of law. Soldiers have taken the law into their own hands and, historically, there have been few prosecutions for such abuses. There is some evidence that this is partly explained by the government and military's fear of damaging the morale of the security forces if discipline and restraint is too rigorously imposed. Where investigations take place it is often ordinary soldiers that are held accountable rather than the chain of command.[39]
5. *Tensions in Civil–Military Relations*. Counterinsurgency theory tends to emphasize the importance of politics rather than force in defeating an insurgency but there is ambiguity over the extent to which politicians or the military should decide policy and coordinate counterinsurgency campaigns. This can lead to severe tensions in civil–military relations and raises questions about democratic control of the military in Western societies militarized by war. In both the United States and U.K. there was conflict between politicians and the military over the conduct of the campaign in Afghanistan, with the military bolstered by powerful military lobbies and public sympathy. The military's more ambitious strategy for implementing a long war, counterinsurgency approach (or a more barbaric approach to counterinsurgency) may require

strong controls on democracy in order to manufacture the political and public consent to successfully implement their strategy. This is in tension with the politician's interest in containing the power of the military over policy and avoiding long, costly, and unpopular wars that cannot be won.[40]

6. *The Hearts and Minds of Domestic Public Opinion.* There is growing public acknowledgement of the constraints that domestic politics and public opinion places on counterinsurgency operations. This was most obvious in America's Vietnam syndrome but Britain and other European powers have struggled to sell war to public opinion and this has even influenced operational decisions.[41] America's Afghan policy was influenced by the ghosts of Vietnam and what strategy U.S. politicians felt they could "sell" to the U.S. public. NATO public opinion turned against the war and the deaths of soldiers have provoked political crises in some western governments. Domestic politics has influenced decisions to withdraw from Afghanistan. The average timescale, 10 to 15 years, for a successful counterinsurgency operation seems longer than most Western publics are willing to tolerate and clashes with the politician's need to manage domestic public opinion.[42] Paradoxically, militarization and strong support for the military can exacerbate the public's reluctance to sacrifice their soldiers in wars that appear to be either unwinnable or struggle to be identified with the "national interest."

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF COUNTERINSURGENCY?

The failure of counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan has raised the question as to whether counterinsurgency has a future. Five perspectives clarify the debate on counterinsurgency. The first two perspectives, the Contras and barbaric counterinsurgency, are difficult to publicly advocate in democracies; therefore they may be promoted and implemented behind a smokescreen of more acceptable rhetoric (so a barbaric approach to counterinsurgency may be favored but this is concealed behind more hearts and minds rhetoric):

1. *The Contras*. The advocates of conventional warfare oppose counterinsurgency because they believe that overwhelming force in an enemy-centric campaign is the most effective way of intimidating the local population and defeating insurgents. The implication of this position is that the West needs a more prominent role for the military and a limited form of democracy if insurgencies are to be defeated through conventional warfare. Western militaries should be trained to use overwhelming force, and counterinsurgency training is inappropriate for creating the warrior ethos that should underpin the military.
2. *Barbaric counterinsurgency.* More aggressive conservative realists argue that counterinsurgency is most effectively pursued through the use of barbarism rather than a reformist, minimum force approach. The shift from courageous restraint to postclassical counterinsurgency or counterterrorism in Afghanistan is an example of this resort to the barbaric counterinsurgency in the hope that it will produce beneficial results.

3. *Neoclassical counterinsurgency*. This approach has been undermined by its abandonment by key COINdnistas, including General Petraeus and David Kilcullen in favor of a post-classical approach. Hard core COINdinistas have been critical of General Petraeus for accepting a time-limited COIN experiment in Afghanistan that was coupled with an announcement of withdrawal that undermined the political will essential to the defeat of insurgents.[43] They argue that the military's learning process has begun to produce results and the politicians are withdrawing from Afghanistan just as a properly implemented counterinsurgency strategy is on the verge of success.
4. *Postclassical approach*. This seems very close to the rejection of counterinsurgency altogether and resembles more of an enemy-centric counterterrorism—or at least a step away from the hearts and minds neoclassical counterinsurgency toward a barbaric counterinsurgency strategy with its emphasis on coercion with an increase in bombing missions, drone strikes, and Special Forces kill/capture raids. This approach is more politically acceptable implying the use of fewer soldiers, over a short period, and reduced risk to those who are deployed. The politicians can claim that they are taking the war to the enemy (by producing infamous body counts), declare victory, and withdraw.[44]
5. *Anti-imperialism*. This critique is rarely considered in the counterinsurgency literature. Yet its account of the history of counterinsurgency and the lack of accountability of the military has been largely accurate (and backed up by some conservative realists) even if some of its expectations and prescriptions have been sometimes naive. Some anti-imperialists are silent about the possibility that sometimes a form of military intervention may be justifiable to prevent mass abuse of human rights. Counterinsurgency theory is produced by the military to enhance its claims for the effectiveness of force and, therefore, its power over policy. But the general skepticism about the effectiveness of military force to bring about the establishment of liberal democracies and consent to occupation expected by neoclassical counterinsurgency theory seems to have been substantiated by the experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan. Anti-imperialists criticize the failure of NATO forces to act with courageous restraint and point to the serious abuses of human rights in both Afghanistan and Iraq as a result of the occupation. The impact of the wars on the quality of democracy in the West has largely been ignored.

Counterinsurgency theory has encouraged the belief that there are simple, objective, and technocratic solutions to complex conflicts. The rhetoric of hearts and minds has concealed the brutal reality of past and current counterinsurgency operations. Counterinsurgency may have reduced the inhibition of fighting wars even as Western public and political opinion appears reluctant to give sustained support for a long counterinsurgency campaign. The failure of the counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan has undermined the West's enthusiasm for war while enhancing the power and prestige of the military. The future of counterinsurgency will not be the product of objective and scientific theoretical debate (concern has been expressed at the militarization of this debate[45]) but rather, as in the past, the product of powerful political, military, economic, cultural, and social forces.[46]

NOTES

1. I am grateful for the comments of Eric Sangar on a previous draft of this essay but I am solely responsible for its arguments and shortcomings.

2. R. Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2005).

3. Paul Dixon, "Beyond Hearts and Minds: Perspectives on Counterinsurgency" in *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: From Malaya and Northern Ireland to Iraq and Afghanistan*, ed. Paul Dixon (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), chap. 2.

4. David French, *The British Way of Counter-Insurgency, 1945–67* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 67, 251.

5. Paul Dixon, " 'Hearts and Minds?' British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32, 3, 368.

6. Colin Gray, *Another Bloody Century* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2006), 223.

7. Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), 91.

8. Dixon, "Beyond Hearts and Minds," 70–71.

9. Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013).

10. David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (London: Hurst, 2010).

11. Kaplan, *Insurgents*.

12. David Kilcullen, "Reading Al-Anbar," *The American Interest*, Autumn, 97.

13. On the role of Neoconservatives see Kaplan, *Insurgents*, 233.

14. Bob Woodward, *Obama's War* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 83, 94, 156.

15. Kilcullen in *The Times*, October 30, 2010.

16. Woodward, *Obama's War*.

17. Ibid., 110, 167.

18. Kaplan, *Insurgents*, chap. 20; Woodward, *Obama's War*.

19. Woodward, *Obama's War*, 86.

20. Stan McChrystal, "COMISAF's Initial Assessment," August 30, 2009, 1–2.

21. Kaplan, *Insurgents*, 324–44.

22. Ibid., 340–44.

23. *The Guardian* July 6, 2011; Paul Dixon, "The British Approach to Counter-insurgency: 'Hearts and Minds' from Malaya to Afghanistan?" in Paul Dixon (ed.) *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency*, 42.

24. *The Guardian*, September 25, 2012.

25. Kaplan, *Insurgents*, 353.

26. Ibid., chap. 22.

27. David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency: The State of a Controversial Art," in Paul B. Rich and I. Duyvesteyn, *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counter-insurgency* (London: Routledge, 2012), 140.

28. David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency: The State of a Controversial Art," 141–43.

29. John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgnecy; From Palestine to Northern Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

30. Kaplan, *Insurgents*, 284–89.

31. Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Paul B. Rich, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Some Conclusions," in Rich and Duveysteyn, *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency* (London: Routledge, 2012), 364, 369; Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

32. S. Metz, "Rethinking Insurgency," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Paul B. Rich and I. Duyvesteyn (London: Routledge, 2012).

33. Steven Metz, "Rethinking Insurgency" in Paul B. Rich and I. Duveysteyn, *The Routledge Handbook*, 32.

34. Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency," 133, 136.

35. David Ucko, "Whither Counterinsurgency: The Rise and Fall of a Divisive Concept" in Rich and Duveysteyn, *The Routledge Handbook*, 74.

36. Kaplan, *Insurgents*.

37. S. L. V. Gorka and David Kilcullen, "An Actor-centric Theory of War: Understanding the Difference between COIN and Counterinsurgency," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 60, no. 1 (2011): 16.

38. French, *The British Way of Counter-Insurgency*, 65.

39. Deborah Nelson, *The War Behind Me: Vietnam Veterans Confront the Truth about US War Crimes* (New York: Basic Books, 2008); John Tirman, *The Deaths of Others: The Fate of Civilians in America's Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

40. Woodward, *Obama's Wars*; Kaplan, *Insurgents*, 354; Andrew Bacevich, *The New American Militarism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Paul Dixon, "Conclusion: The Military and British Democracy" in Paul Dixon, ed., *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency.*

41. T. Noetzel and S. Schiepers, "Coalition warfare in Afghanistan: Burden-sharing or Disunity?" Chatham House, Briefing Paper, October, 2007; Kaplan, *Insurgents*, 322–23.

42. Woodward, *Obama's wars*; Paul Dixon, "Bringing It All Back Home: The Militarisation of Britain and the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars," in Paul Dixon, ed., *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency*, 139–41.

43. Kaplan, *Insurgents*.

44. Woodward, *Obama's Wars*.

45. D. Miller and T. Mills, "Counterinsurgency and Terror Expertise: The Integration of Social Scientists into the War Effort," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2010); and D. Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN' Small Wars and Insurgencies," 22, no. 2 (2011).

46. Concern has been expressed at the militarization of this debate; see Douglas Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 22, no. 2 (2011); Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Explosing the Myths of the New Way of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); David Miller and Tom Mills, "Counterinsurgency and Terror Expertise: The Integration of Social Scientists into the War Effort," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 23, no. 2 (2010).

Guide to Further Reading

Gregory Fremont-Barnes

PART I: GENERAL CATEGORIES

- Counterinsurgency—General Principles, Theory, Doctrine, Lessons Learned
- General Studies of Counterinsurgency
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- China—General
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- France—Napoleonic Era
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- India—Domestic Counterinsurgency
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- Portugal—Africa
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- Spain—Basque Region
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- Soviet Union—Afghanistan
- Sri Lanka—Tamil Separatism
- Thailand—Domestic Counterinsurgency
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- Turkey—Kurdish Separatism
- United States—General
- United States—Philippines
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About the Editor and Contributors

EDITOR

GREGORY FREMONT-BARNES holds a doctorate in Modern History from the University of Oxford and serves as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. Dividing his time between teaching cadets on-site and officers of the British Army posted to garrisons throughout Britain and abroad, his wider counterinsurgency teaching and advisory role for the U.K. Ministry of Defence takes him regularly to Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, South America, and continental Europe. He has lived for extensive periods in Britain, the United States, and Japan and has conducted battlefield studies for the British Army in half a dozen countries, including the Falklands. He has written and edited extensively, with books on a wide range of military and naval subjects spanning the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries.

CONTRIBUTORS

DUNCAN ANDERSON, the Head of the Department of War Studies at Sandhurst since 1997, has degrees from the University of Queensland, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario, and the University of Oxford. Following 9/11, Dr. Anderson deployed to Iraq (2005 and 2006), attached to the Iraqi Military Academy at Ar Rustamiyah. He also embedded with the USMC (January 2005) in Fallujah and the U.S. Army (July–August 2006) in Ramadi, witnessing heavy fighting in both cities. Dr. Anderson embedded with 1 Royal Anglian in Sangin (Summer 2007),

again witnessing intense combat, and embedded again with this regiment in the Nad-e Ali district of Helmand in summer 2012. With Britain's establishment of a military academy in Kabul, Dr Anderson deployed in January 2013 and returned to the UK in December 2014.

ROGER CHAPMAN, Associate Professor of History at Palm Beach Atlantic University, obtained his doctorate in American Culture Studies and History at Bowling Green State University. For years, he has regularly taught a course on the history of modern terrorism from the French Revolution to Al-Qaeda. Prior to becoming an academic, Chapman served in the U.S. Army with the 1st Ranger Battalion and was a participant in the ill-fated Operation *Eagle Claw*. Dr Chapman is editor of *Culture Wars: An Encyclopedia of Issues, Viewpoints, and Voices* (2 vols.). In addition, his articles on various topics pertaining to the Cold War or terrorism have appeared in *Spies, Wiretaps, and Secret Operations*: *The Encyclopedia of Prisoners of War and Internment*, the *Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, and *An Encyclopedia of American Espionage*.

PAUL DIXON is Reader in Politics and International Studies at Kingston University, having taught previously at the universities of Ulster, Leeds, and Luton. He is the editor of *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: From Malaya and Northern Ireland to Iraq and Afghanistan* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). This evolved from a conference on the British approach to counterinsurgency organized with the Royal United Services Institute in September 2007 and a special issue of the *Journal of Strategic Studies*. He is also author of *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace* (Palgrave, 2nd edition, 2008) and with Eamonn O'Kane, *Northern Ireland since 1969* (Pearson, 2011). He is currently researching the impact of fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on British society and democracy.

AARON EDWARDS is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Defence and International Affairs at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Awarded his Ph.D. from Queen's University Belfast in 2006, he has written extensively about terrorism and insurgency, with a particular interest in the Northern Ireland "Troubles" and Britain's role in the Middle East. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, he is author of *A History of the Northern Ireland Labour Party: Democratic Socialism and Sectarianism* (Manchester University Press, 2009, 2011), *Defending the Realm? The Politics of Britain's Small Wars since 1945* (Manchester University Press, 2012), and *Mad Mitch's Tribal Law: Aden and the End of Empire* (Mainstream Publishing, 2014). He is currently writing two books: *War: A Beginner's Guide* for Oneworld Publications and *Strategy in War and Peace* for Edinburgh University Press.

DANIEL MARSTON, BA MA (McGill) DPhil (Oxford) FRHist holds a Professorship in Military Studies and is also the Principal of the Military and Defence Studies Program at the Australian Command & Staff College in Canberra. He previously held the Ike Skelon Distinguished Chair of the Art of War at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He has been a Visiting Fellow with the Oxford Leverhulme Programme on the Changing Character of War. He was a Senior Lecturer in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He advised the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and the British Army in Iraq and Afghanistan between 2006 and 2014.

PETER J. RAINOW Ph.D. is author and coauthor of five books and more than 60 chapters and articles in military and international history published in the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, USSR, Russia, and Ukraine. In 1996–97, he was a Visiting Scholar at Stanford University; in 1990–92, he also participated in the Consensus Project on the future of International Relations at the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University. In 1987–98, he taught International History and International Relations at the University of Odessa, USSR/Ukraine.

SIMON ROBBINS, a Senior Archivist in the Department of Research at the Imperial War Museums, studied History at Nottingham University and earned his doctorate in War Studies at King's College London. He is expert on British and Commonwealth military history since 1899. He is author of *British Generalship on the Western Front, 1914–18: Defeat into Victory* (runner-up for the 2004 Templer Medal), *The First World War Letters of General Lord Horne*, and *British Generalship during the Great War: The Military Career of Sir Henry Horne (1861–1929*) and coauthor of *Staff Officer: The Diaries of Walter Guinness (First Lord Moyne), 1914–18*, *Haig's Generals*, and *Stemming the Tide: Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914* (runner-up for the 2013 Templer Medal). His book, *Dirty Wars: A Century of Counterinsurgency*, is forthcoming in 2015.

PAUL ROSENTALL joined the Royal Air Force in 1970 and, after jet training, became a helicopter pilot, instructor, and examiner, flying over 6,000 hours in several types of helicopter all over the world. He commanded a squadron, completed many years on operations and was a Joint Helicopter Force Commander in the Balkans. Interspersed with flying, he attended RAF Staff College and completed staff tours in Strategic Plans, Contingency (War) Plans, and Exercise Plans in Headquarters RAF Air Command. Retiring after 40 years in the RAF with the rank of Wing Commander, his passionate interest in military history and strategy led him to complete a Masters degree in Military History at the University of

Buckingham. His thesis was about the confrontation between Indonesia and the United Kingdom over the formation of Malaysia, 1963–66.

WILLIAM A. TAYLOR is Assistant Professor of Security Studies at Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas. He earned a doctorate in History at George Washington University. Taylor won grants from the Harry S. Truman Library Institute and Society for Military History and a George C. Marshall/Baruch Fellowship to research his forthcoming *Every Citizen a Soldier* to be published with Texas A&M University Press. Taylor won Dwight D. Eisenhower Foundation and Gerald R. Ford Foundation grants to research *In the Service of Democracy* to be published with University Press of Kansas. In addition to his academic credentials, Taylor served as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps for more than six years, holding posts in III Marine Expeditionary Force, Expeditionary Force Development Center, and Marine Corps Combat Development Command.

JAMES WORRALL is Lecturer in International Relations and Middle East Studies in the School of Politics and International Studies at the University of Leeds. His research interests lie within Security Studies and International Relations with primary geographical focus on the Gulf and the Levant, and thematic focus on Gulf Politics, Regional International Organisations, Security Sector Reform, Regime Stability, and Legitimacy and Counterinsurgency Strategy, with particular emphasis on non-Western approaches to COIN, the role of escalation, allies, and microdynamics, especially territoriality. For the latter, see: "Bringing the Soil Back In: Control and Territoriality in Western and Non-Western COIN?" in Celeste Ward-Gventner, et al., eds., *The New Counter-Insurgency Era in Critical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Dr Worrall's monograph, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman*, was published by IB Tauris in 2014.

EDMUND YORKE (Ph.D. Cambridge) is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He is also currently serving as a counterinsurgency advisor on "Insider Threats/Killings Prevention" in Afghanistan for the UK Ministry of Defense. He is a specialist in British Imperial and Commonwealth military history and post–World War II counterinsurgency campaigns. His many published books and articles have included, *The New South Africa: Prospects for Domestic and International Security* (Macmillan, 1997), *Playing the Great Game: Britain, War and Politics in Afghanistan since 1839* (Robert Hale, 2012), and *Forgotten Colonial Crisis: Britain, Northern Rhodesia and the First World War, 1914–18* (Taurus/Macmillan, 2014). He was present, as an independent observer, during the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe independence transition period in early 1980.

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